



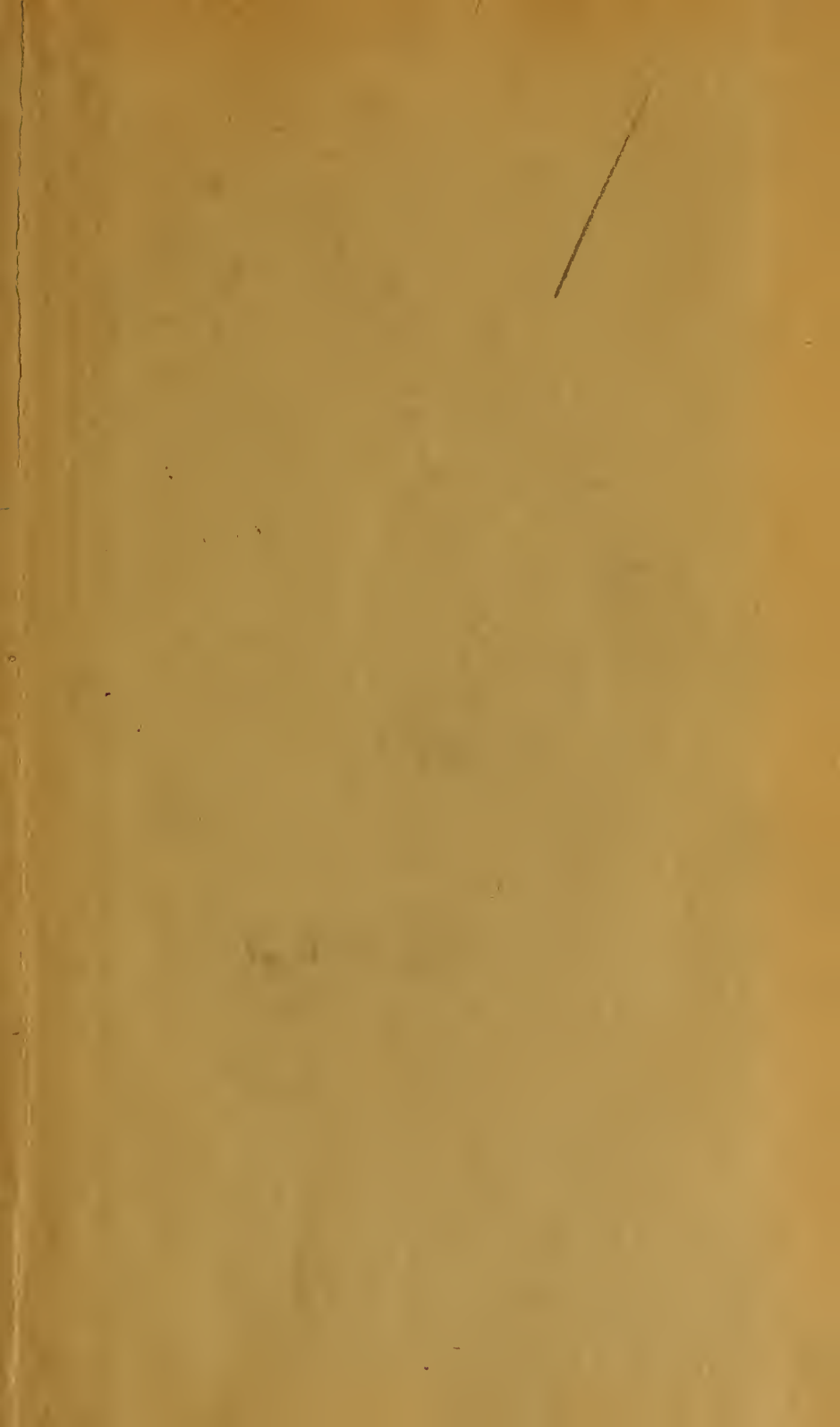
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GRACE ABBOTT, Chief

# CHILD LABOR IN NEW JERSEY

## PART 2

### CHILDREN ENGAGED IN INDUSTRIAL HOME WORK

By

MARY SKINNER

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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
CHILDREN'S BUREAU,  
*Washington, March 5, 1928.*

SIR: There is transmitted herewith a report on children in industrial home work in New Jersey. The investigation upon which this report was based was planned and carried out under the general supervision of Ellen Nathalie Matthews, director of the industrial division of the Children's Bureau, and was one of several studies relating to the employment of children in New Jersey made by the Children's Bureau. Mary Skinner was in charge of the field work and has written the report.

Acknowledgment is made of the cooperation given the bureau by the State department of labor and by public-school officials and social agencies.

GRACE ABBOTT, *Chief.*

HON. JAMES J. DAVIS,  
*Secretary of Labor.*



# CHILDREN ENGAGED IN INDUSTRIAL HOME WORK IN NEW JERSEY

## INTRODUCTION

New Jersey has an importance in industrial home work far beyond the extent to which its own manufacturers make use of the home-work system. Its nearness to New York and Philadelphia, both centers of industries that employ home workers in large numbers, provides a tempting supply of labor for manufacturers in these cities. The labor supply for home work, besides being conveniently situated, is especially advantageous to these manufacturers because as employers residing outside the State they can seldom, if ever, be prosecuted under the New Jersey laws regulating industrial home work; and, as regards work sent into New Jersey, they are beyond the jurisdiction of the home-work laws of their own States.

In many respects the Pennsylvania and New York laws regulating industrial home work are much more stringent than those of New Jersey. Both Pennsylvania and New York regulate the employment of children in home work through their child labor laws, and in both these States the employer distributing the work is subject to a penalty for violation; but in New Jersey not only is the child labor law<sup>1</sup> not construed to apply to work done for factories in homes but the so-called sweatshop law,<sup>2</sup> by which industrial home work is regulated, does not regulate the employment of children nor place the penalty for violation of its provisions upon the employer. It requires that a license be obtained before the work may be carried on in any tenement or dwelling house, setting certain sanitary and health standards as prerequisites to the granting of a license, and prohibits entirely the manufacture of certain articles (food; dolls and dolls' clothing; children's and infants' wearing apparel) in tenement homes; but although it prohibits employers from giving out home work to persons not holding a license and requires them to keep available for inspection a list of the names and addresses of their home workers, it places the penalty for violating the licensing provisions of the law upon the owner, lessee, or occupant of the building where the work is done and is therefore much more difficult to enforce than if the employer were held responsible.

The State department of labor enforces the sweatshop law in New Jersey. It issues the licenses, and its factory inspectors, in addition to their other duties, inspect for home work in their respective districts. But owing to lack of an adequate force and sufficient funds little was done toward enforcing home-work regulations until 1923, when a study made by the department of labor and other interested agencies called the attention of the general

<sup>1</sup> P. L. 1904, ch. 64, as amended by P. L. 1914, chs. 60, 236, and 252, P. L. 1919, ch. 36, and P. L. 1923, ch. 80, and supplemented by P. L. 1916, ch. 242; P. L. 1911, ch. 136, as amended by P. L. 1914, ch. 253, P. L. 1918, ch. 204, and P. L. 1919, ch. 37. This law applies not only to factories but also to employment in any place where the manufacture of goods is carried on.

<sup>2</sup> P. L. 1917, ch. 176, approved Mar. 27, 1917, amendatory of and supplemental to P. L. 1904, ch. 64, approved Mar. 24, 1904. (For text see p. 61.)

public to the extent of home work in the State<sup>3</sup> and the amount of child labor connected with it. As a result of this investigation special efforts were made to license all places where home work was being done, but employers giving out the work to unlicensed homes could not be prosecuted under the sweatshop law,<sup>4</sup> and it was obviously impossible to control the home-work situation by prosecuting the home-working families who as occupants were liable under the law. The department in its efforts to discourage the employment of children in industrial home work prosecuted employers and parents under the New Jersey child-welfare act, which imposes a fine or prison sentence or both upon any person guilty of abuse or cruelty toward a child and specifically includes as "abuse" employing a child or permitting him to be employed in any work injurious to his health.<sup>5</sup> At that time also the department began to have printed on the licenses issued for home work a statement that the license "does not permit child labor," and warned the holders of licenses that the license would be revoked if it was found that children were assisting with the work. As an aid to more effective enforcement of the licensing provisions the cooperation of local boards of health was enlisted in many of the smaller communities in the State, the local health officers making the home inspections in these communities and forwarding their reports to the State department of labor. An attempt made at the next session of the legislature (1924) to have the sweatshop law amended so as to impose the penalty for giving out work in unlicensed homes upon the employer was unsuccessful.

The widespread distribution of home work in New Jersey is indicated by the licenses granted in 1923,<sup>6</sup> when these special efforts were being made to enforce the sweatshop law and when, consequently, the number of licenses issued can be considered as complete a representation as is obtainable of the number of home-working families (though not of the number of individuals, as each family may contain a number of workers). In that year 8,742 licenses were issued to families in 242 cities and towns throughout the State. (See map, p. 3.) Five of these communities had a population of more than 100,000, 15 had from 25,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, 18 from 10,000 to 25,000 inhabitants, 64 from 2,500 to 10,000 inhabitants, and 140 less than 2,500 inhabitants. In addition to the licensed workers, a very considerable number of families work without licenses, as appears from the fact that although, according to the records of the New Jersey Department of Labor, more than 4,000 licenses were issued in the State during the year covered by the bureau's inquiry, only 73 of the 628 families visited during the Children's Bureau study of children in industrial home work in New Jersey were included among those to whom these licenses had been issued.

<sup>3</sup> The findings of this investigation are summarized in the following report: "In accordance with the instructions from Lewis G. Bryant, commissioner of labor, is the Report of the Investigation and Survey of the General Home-Work Situation in the State of New Jersey, conducted under the supervision of Charles H. Weeks, deputy commissioner of labor, assisted by Miss Mary A. Thumith, special investigator." 75 pp. (Mimeographed.)

<sup>4</sup> Opinion of State attorney general, May 29, 1923.

<sup>5</sup> P. L. 1915, ch. 246, as amended by P. L. 1918, ch. 85. The penalty under this law is a fine not to exceed \$100 or imprisonment for one year or both fine and imprisonment.

<sup>6</sup> Report to Andrew F. McBride, commissioner of labor, in connection with the enforcement of the home-work and sweatshop laws in the State of New Jersey from June 1 to Dec. 1, 1923, by Charles H. Weeks, deputy commissioner of labor. 57 pp. (Mimeographed.)



LOCALITIES IN NEW JERSEY IN WHICH LICENSES FOR INDUSTRIAL HOME WORK  
WERE GRANTED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR FROM JUNE 1 TO  
DECEMBER 1, 1923



## SCOPE AND METHOD OF STUDY

The Children's Bureau study of children engaged in industrial home work in New Jersey was part of an inquiry into the work of children of school age, which was one of a series of studies of child welfare in New Jersey made by the bureau in 1925.<sup>1</sup> The plan of the study included a canvass of children attending the public schools in selected localities to ascertain the names and addresses of pupils who did factory work in their homes, visits to the homes of the children thus located, and interviews with manufacturers and contractors (that is, persons who obtain work from manufacturers and distribute it to the home workers), and with other individuals and agencies interested in the home-work problem.

In order to locate cities and towns that would offer the best opportunity for a study of industrial home work, preliminary information regarding the number of children so employed and the kinds of work in which they were engaged was obtained through a canvass of the public schools in 12 selected localities—Newark, Paterson, Perth Amboy, Bradley Beach, Bradley Park, North Bergen, South River, Sayreville, Plainfield, Hammonton, Egg Harbor, and Vineland. With the exception of Paterson, which was included because it was one of the cities in which the other parts of the study of the employment of children of school age were being carried on by the bureau, these localities were selected for the following reasons: (1) Because it was known from the licenses issued in previous years that home work existed there, (2) because they were representative of different types of home work, and (3) because they represented towns of different sizes, ranging in population from about 2,300 to more than 400,000, located in different parts of the State.

Through the cooperation of the public-school authorities in these localities the names and addresses were obtained of all children in the public schools under 16 years of age who reported that they had helped with home work at any time during the previous year.<sup>2</sup> No canvass was made of parochial-school children, who form a considerable portion of the school population in the large cities. Moreover, even the reports from the public schools can not be considered complete, because some working children failed to report, a fact that became evident later when agents upon visiting the homes sometimes found that several children had been at work within the year in a family in which only one had reported.

On completion of the preliminary canvass 7 of the 12 cities were chosen for intensive study—Newark, Paterson, North Bergen, South River, Sayreville, Hammonton, and Vineland. Newark has long been

<sup>1</sup> Of these the following have been published to date: Child Welfare in New Jersey—Pt. 1, State Supervision and Personnel Administration; pt. 2, State Provision for Dependent Children; pt. 4, Local Provision for Dependent and Delinquent Children in Relation to the State's Program. Child Labor in New Jersey—Pt. 1, Employment of School Children in New Jersey, is in press.

<sup>2</sup> In Newark and Paterson the canvass was made by bureau agents; in the other localities by school-teachers. Two thousand six hundred and seventy-eight children reported home work, as follows: Newark, 1,484; North Bergen, 353; South River, 322; Vineland, 223; Plainfield, 95; Perth Amboy, 59; Paterson, 38; Hammonton, 37; Sayreville, 32; Egg Harbor, 18; Bradley Beach, 9; Bradley Park, 8.

one of the leading manufacturing cities in the country and ranks first among cities of its size in diversity of industry. Though well under the influence of the business activities of New York City, which is approximately 15 miles away, it has kept its own individuality and has its own active and important manufacturing industries. It had a population of 414,524 in 1920, of whom 16,977 were negroes and 250,378 foreign born or of foreign-born parentage.<sup>3</sup> It is one of the largest home-work centers in the State and does a greater variety of home work than most of the cities studied, the principal kinds being finishing men's clothing, beadings and embroidering women's dresses, and sewing powder puffs. Some home work is given out by local manufacturers, but much of it is brought in from New York City.

Paterson is the center of the silk-manufacturing industry in the United States. It had a population of 135,375 in 1920,<sup>2</sup> of which a large percentage, as in Newark, were either foreign born or of foreign-born parentage. In Paterson, unlike the other cities, home work is not centered in any one or two industries, but includes a variety of work, each kind distributed to only a few families. Most of the home work is distributed from local firms, but occasionally families obtain it direct from New York City.

North Bergen, with a population of 23,344, is one of a chain of towns that stretch along the Jersey bank of the Hudson. It has many and various industries, but all developed on only a small scale. The home work consists of skeining silk, scalloping handkerchiefs, and making artificial flowers. Probably the majority of the townspeople, of whom a large percentage are Italian, work in New York City, crossing daily on the ferry, and much of the home work done in the community is from New York firms, though, considering the size of the place, a surprisingly large amount is obtained from local or near-by factories.

South River and Sayreville are adjoining towns located in the center of the State not far from New Brunswick. Their combined population is about 14,000. Together they form part of a borough composed of several scattered settlements, each called into being and supported by an industry which forms its nucleus. Sayreville centers around a brick plant which is reported to be one of the largest in the world, employing from 800 to 1,000 workmen. Originally it was a German colony, but a large number of Poles have drifted in until they outnumber the descendants of the original Germans. There are also some Hungarians and Austrians, and a few negroes who were brought in during a labor crisis some years ago. The industrial life of South River centers in a clay works which employs some 300 men and in various small lace and embroidery factories. It was in its beginning a settlement of Swiss immigrants, whose descendants now make up the employing class. Hungarians, Poles, and a few Danes and Italians constitute the laboring class. Much of the home work in these communities comes from local lace and embroidery factories. In South River a rather unique industry of handkerchief embroidery has sprung up identical with that preva-

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<sup>3</sup>Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, vol. 3, Population, p. 152 (Washington, 1913); Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, vol. 3, Population, p. 646 (Washington, 1922).

lent in the countries from which the workers come, where much of the manufacture is still done in the homes.

Hammonton, located in the fruit-farming section of southern New Jersey not far from Philadelphia, has about 6,500 inhabitants. Its people are chiefly Italians, brought in originally as laborers by American farmers and now landowners themselves. Aside from farming the only industries in the community are some small glass factories, a shoe factory, and several clothing shops attracted by cheap rent and labor. In the summer the people are occupied with farm work, but in the winter they do home work, chiefly crocheting of infants' wear.

Vineland, with a population of about 7,000 consisting largely of Italians and Russian Jews, is, like Hammonton, in the center of an Italian farming community. It is an important distributing center for farm implements and farm produce. Apart from this the most important industries are the manufacture of glass and men's clothing. Home work on men's clothing, which was found in a large percentage of the homes, was procured from local contract shops which trucked in their material daily from New York and Philadelphia factories.

In the cities chosen for intensive study the homes of all children reporting home work in the preliminary canvass were visited, and detailed information concerning their work was sought for all those in the household under 16 years of age whom the parents acknowledged to have worked on factory material brought into the home for at least 26 days (one working month), not necessarily consecutively, during the preceding year. Information could be obtained, however, for only a small proportion of the workers, as many of the parents, in spite of the fact that the children had reported to the contrary in the school canvass, refused to admit that the children had worked, having been taught caution by the efforts in 1923 to improve the administration of the home-work laws following studies made in the State, at which time a number of families had been prosecuted. Some of them denied any work at all; others, apparently fearing legal penalties, minimized the amount, saying that it had been done for a few days only or that it had been done some years previously. In some instances this was no doubt true, but in many it was undoubtedly incorrect in view of the detailed information to the contrary given by the children at school. In Newark, the largest center of home work visited, 997 of 1,484 children who reported home work were excluded after visits to the homes—951 because the parents said that the children had not worked at all or had worked less than 26 days and the remaining 46 because the families had moved out of the city or were not located or for other reasons. In the other cities also a considerable proportion of the children first reporting had to be excluded, so that work histories were obtained for only 711 of the 2,489 children from the seven cities reporting in the preliminary canvass.

Other children than those located in the canvass, however, were included in the study. In the course of visits to the homes of those reporting in the school canvass the children of neighbors who had failed to report or who, as was more often the case, attended other than public schools and therefore had had no opportunity to report



were called to the attention of the bureau agents, and visits were subsequently made to their homes and work histories taken. In all, work histories were obtained for 1,131 children in the seven cities, representing 628 families. (Table 1.)

All the manufacturers and contractors who gave out work to the families included in the study (either directly or through contractors or subcontractors) and who could be located were interviewed; the numbers reached were 158 manufacturers and 99 contractors. Although these figures may not comprise all those giving out home work in the localities visited, they are sufficiently large to be considered representative of the group as a whole.

The information obtained from the home workers and the manufacturers and contractors was supplemented by information obtained from the State department of labor, social agencies, and interested persons who as outsiders were able to judge of the far-reaching effects of this type of production.

The State department of labor gave the bureau agents access to its records of licenses issued to homeworkers in the State. The Social Service Exchange of Newark and Paterson furnished information as to the social agencies interested in the families visited in the course of the study, and the social agencies in those cities put their records at the disposal of the agents.

TABLE 1.—*Number of children engaged in industrial home work, by city and sex*

City	Children under 16 engaged in industrial home work			City	Children under 16 engaged in industrial home work		
	Total	Boys	Girls		Total	Boys	Girls
Total.....	1,131	311	820	North Bergen.....	63	13	50
Newark.....	849	232	617	Paterson.....	30	11	19
Vineland.....	107	29	78	Hammonton.....	14	4	10
South River and Sayreville.....	68	22	46				

# THE HOME-WORK SYSTEM

## INDUSTRIES USING HOME WORK IN NEW JERSEY

### KINDS OF PRODUCTS

The following enumeration of the different kinds of factory work done in their homes by the families included in the Children's Bureau study indicates how varied are the industries that can and do utilize the home-work system in New Jersey. (See also Table 5, p. 19.)

	Number and residence of families and location
Men's clothing.....	251 (Newark, 196; Vineland, 51; Paterson, 2; South River, 1; Hammonton, 1).
Women's clothing.....	86 (Newark, 81; Paterson, 3; South River, 1; North Bergen, 1).
Powder puffs.....	45 (Newark).
Tags.....	28 (Newark).
Handkerchiefs.....	24 (South River and Sayreville, 23; North Bergen, 1).
Artificial flowers and ribbon novelties.	23 (Newark, 10; North Bergen, 11; Paterson, 2).
Lace and embroideries.....	24 (South River and Sayreville, 11; North Bergen, 11; Paterson, 2).
Dolls' garments.....	19 (Newark).
Safety pins.....	13 (Newark).
Buttons.....	12 (Newark, 6; North Bergen, 6).
Strips for brassieres and corsets.	11 (Newark).
Bead jewelry.....	11 (Newark, 10; Paterson, 1).
Ladies' underwear.....	10 (South River and Sayreville).
Christmas seals and cards..	7 (Newark).
Neckties.....	6 (Newark).
Children's clothing.....	6 (Newark, 4; Paterson, 1; South River, 1).
Baby socks.....	5 (Hammonton).
Embroidery floss.....	5 (North Bergen).
Fireworks.....	5 (Vineland, 4; North Bergen, 1).
Paper boxes.....	4 (Newark).
Badges.....	4 (Newark).
Toys.....	3 (Newark).
Swift bands and fliers for silk mills.	2 (Paterson).
Hosiery.....	2 (Paterson).
Cards for manicure sets....	2 (Newark).
Hats.....	2 (Newark).
Chamois skin.....	2 (Newark).
Hooks for money bags.....	2 (Newark).
Paper bags.....	2 (Paterson).
Rags for carpets.....	1 (Paterson).
Feathers.....	1 (Paterson).
Dye papers.....	1 (Newark).
Celluloid cards.....	1 (Newark).
Powder for making soup....	1 (Vineland).
Scarfs.....	1 (Newark).
Ornaments.....	1 (Newark).
Labels for underwear.....	1 (South River).
Towels.....	1 (Paterson).
Curtains.....	1 (North Bergen).
Garters.....	1 (Vineland).
Spools.....	1 (Paterson).

The industries found to be distributing home work in the survey made by the State department of labor in 1923 were even more numerous since this survey covered the entire State.<sup>1</sup> In both studies work on various kinds of wearing apparel was found to predominate, the men's clothing industry being the largest single distributor of home work in the State.<sup>2</sup>

#### LOCATION AND SIZE OF ESTABLISHMENTS DISTRIBUTING HOME WORK

Industrial home work is distributed in New Jersey not only by manufacturers within the State but also by those of neighboring manufacturing centers, chiefly New York City. Of the 158 manufacturers interviewed who distributed home work to families included in the Children's Bureau study, 102 had headquarters outside the towns included in the study in which they were distributing. Of these, 87 were in New York, 4 in Philadelphia, 4 in West New York, N. J., 2 in Union City, and 1 in each of the New Jersey cities of Bloomfield, Camden, Plainfield, Perth Amboy, and Haledon. Of the remaining 56, 38 were located in Newark, 5 in North Bergen, 5 in Paterson, 4 in South River, and 4 in Vineland.

The establishments giving out home work ranged in size from the very small shop with only one or two inside workers to the factory with several hundred employees. The number of home workers, ranging from 1 to 400 per shop, bore no relation to the number of inside workers. One shop with only 8 inside workers on its pay roll employed 20 home workers, one with 401 inside workers had only 7 home workers, and one with 50 inside workers had 100 home workers. The number of home workers obtaining work directly from the manufacturers and contractors visited was at least 4,680. More persons actually worked on the materials sent out by these employers, however, as in most cases the individual obtaining the work represented a family of home workers and in some instances was a contractor (not included in the study) who distributed the work obtained to other persons.

#### METHODS OF DISTRIBUTION

##### DIRECT DISTRIBUTION AND DISTRIBUTION BY CONTRACTORS

The methods of distributing home work vary with the different industries. Only about one-third of the 158 manufacturers interviewed gave out work direct to the home workers, whereas about half gave out all their work through contractors, and approximately one-sixth used both methods. Table 2 shows the methods of distribution employed by the manufacturers interviewed in the Children's

<sup>1</sup> Report to Andrew F. McBride, commissioner of labor, in connection with the enforcement of the home work and sweatshop laws in the State of New Jersey from June 1 to Dec. 1, 1923, by Charles H. Weeks, deputy commissioner of labor. 57 pp. (Mimeographed.)

<sup>2</sup> The proportion of families and individuals engaged in work on men's clothing in the Children's Bureau study was, however, considerably larger than the proportion of licenses issued for such work in the survey made by the State department of labor (44 per cent as compared with 20 per cent). This difference was doubtless due primarily to the fact that whereas the State survey was state-wide and covered 243 communities, the Children's Bureau study was confined to 7 communities, which included Newark, the largest city in the State, where 71 per cent of the families working on men's clothes included in the Children's Bureau study were located.

Bureau study, according to their location. As practically half the manufacturers were in the men's clothing industry, separate figures are shown for that industry.

TABLE 2.—*Number of manufacturers distributing home work to families interviewed in the Children's Bureau study, by method of distribution and location of manufacturers*

Industry and method of distribution	Location of manufacturers														
	Total	New York	Newark	Paterson	Philadelphia	South River	Vineland	West New York	Perth Amboy	Plainfield	Union City	Bloomfield	Camden	Haledon	North Bergen
Total.....	158	87	38	5	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	1	1	1
Distributing directly to home worker.....	53	1	24	5	---	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	1	1	---
Distributing through contractor.....	81	69	10	---	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1
Distributing both directly and through contractor.....	24	17	4	---	3	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Men's clothing.....	78	57	15	---	4	---	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1
Distributing directly to home worker.....	4	---	3	---	---	---	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Distributing through contractor.....	66	54	10	---	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1
Distributing both directly and through contractor.....	8	3	2	---	3	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Other.....	80	30	23	5	---	4	3	4	3	3	2	1	1	1	---
Distributing directly to home worker.....	49	1	21	5	---	4	3	4	3	3	2	1	1	1	---
Distributing through contractor.....	15	15	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Distributing both directly and through contractor.....	16	14	2	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

#### TYPES OF CONTRACTORS

Contractors are of two types—home contractors, who act primarily as distributing agents, though they may have a small improvised workshop in their own home to which outside workers come, and factory contractors who are in reality manufacturers themselves. The latter receive their materials from the manufacturer ready to be put together and make up the goods in their own shops or factories, sending it to home workers for the finishing processes. The following enumeration shows the number of home and factory contractors distributing home work to the families interviewed and the industries with which they were connected:

Factory contractors:	Number of contractors and location
Men's clothing.....	56 (Newark, 43; Vineland, 12; Paterson, 1).
Women's clothing.....	5 (Newark, 1; New York, 3; South River, 1).
Handkerchiefs.....	3 (South River, 1; West New York, 2).
Fireworks.....	1 (North Bergen).
Underwear.....	1 (South River).
Home contractors:	
Women's clothing.....	15 (Newark, 13; New York, 1; North Bergen, 1).
Ribbon novelties and artificial flowers.....	3 (Newark).
Powder puffs.....	3 (Newark).
Bead jewelry.....	3 (Newark).



Home contractors—Continued.	Number of contractors and location
Baby socks-----	2 (Hammonton).
Dolls' dresses-----	1 (Newark).
Safety pins-----	1 (Newark).
Chamois skin-----	1 (Newark).
Tags-----	1 (Newark).
Ladies' and children's dresses-----	1 (Newark).
Embroidery floss-----	1 (North Bergen).
Neckties and garters----	1 (Orange, N. J.).

## THE CONTRACT SYSTEM IN THE MEN'S CLOTHING INDUSTRY

The principal center in the United States of the men's clothing industry, which was found to be by far the largest distributor of home work in New Jersey, is New York City.<sup>3</sup> In and around New York City the industry is so organized that most of the work is done in contract shops, and an unusually large proportion (in 1925, 13 per cent) of its workers are home workers. The percentage of home workers is more than twice that found in the industry in Rochester, N. Y.,<sup>4</sup> and it is said that home work has been very largely eliminated from the clothing industry in Chicago. In both these cities large and well-organized factories provide adequate working space, and a fairly standardized product has greatly reduced seasonality and the necessity for a large labor reserve. In the vicinity of New York the market demands large orders on short notice,<sup>5</sup> and the small contract shop permits of quick expansion and contraction in production with a minimum of inconvenience to the manufacturer.

Although some manufacturers, known as inside manufacturers, operate their own factories and have their goods made up on their own premises, even these usually have part of their work done on contract. In general the manufacturer merely buys the cloth and designs and cuts the garment, farming it out to contract shops for the actual making. The contractor, who is in reality the manufacturer, receives the cut cloth and makes it into garments on a contract basis, usually specializing in one type of garment—coats, trousers, or vests. Both the inside manufacturer and the contractor make use of home workers for the hand operations known as "finishing"; the latter much more extensively than the former, however, as his success, even more than that of the manufacturer, is in proportion to the amount of work he can get done at the lowest price and the overhead he can save.

Coats are finished at home quite generally, trousers frequently, and vests occasionally. Trousers of the cheaper grade are sometimes

<sup>3</sup> In 1921 the men's clothing manufactured in New York City equaled 39.8 per cent of the value of these products in selected cities in the United States; Chicago produced 20.2 per cent, Philadelphia 7 per cent, Rochester 6.2 per cent, and Baltimore 5.8 per cent. (Biennial Census of Manufactures, 1921, p. 264, Washington, 1924.)

<sup>4</sup> Labor, Department of, State of New York: Home Work in the Men's Clothing Industry in New York and Rochester. Special Bulletin No. 147, August, 1926, pp. 14, 47.

<sup>5</sup> "New York City is a spot market. Retailers buy their last-minute demands here and expect immediate delivery. The manufacturer is in a position to guarantee immediate delivery because the contract system and the presence of a large reserve of skilled labor render it easy to manufacture on short notice. New York City manufactures cheap and medium grades of clothing as contrasted with Rochester and Chicago, where quality clothing is made. It is easy to make this type of clothing on short notice. New York manufacturers do not make for stock to any extent. They sell from samples, both through traveling salesmen and in their New York offices. Cloth is usually bought after the orders come in, and the product is shipped promptly to the retailer." Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs: Economic and Industrial Survey—The Clothing and Textile Industries, p. 22. Committee on Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs, New York, 1925.

finished inside by machine, but no machine has been perfected that will do the more complicated work on coats satisfactorily. Vests are not sent out so generally as the other parts of the garment, because the amount of handwork required is so slight that it does not pay to have it done outside unless buttonholes also are to be made by hand. The sharp expansion and contraction of business characteristic of the New York market produces a highly seasonal industry. The industry has two rush periods of three to four months each—one in the spring and one in the fall, followed by periods of acute depression.

A study of home work in the men's clothing industry in New York City made by the New York State Department of Labor in 1925 and summarizing conditions over a period of three years shows that in shops operated by manufacturers home-work employment sank to 24 per cent below the average in the dull period between the spring and fall seasons and rose to 19 per cent above the average in the autumn season following, and that 33 per cent of the home workers employed at the height of the season were laid off during the dull period following.<sup>6</sup> For contract shops, which are more frequent in New Jersey than shops operated by manufacturers, the extremes shown are even greater. In this group during the three years home-work employment fell to 34 per cent below the average in the dull season and rose to 27 per cent above in the fall, and 43 per cent of the workers employed during the fall season were dropped in the slack winter season following. Home workers in the men's clothing industry, however, have the advantage of being assured work within certain periods and of knowing in advance approximately when these periods will be—an opportunity not afforded in most seasonal house-working industries, in which fluctuations are less marked and are apt to occur at any time within the year, depending on the rate at which the factory orders are received.

Home work on men's clothing was practically confined to two of the New Jersey cities visited—Newark and Vineland. These cities are teeming with contract shops, which depend upon the manufacturers of New York and Philadelphia for their existence. Every day truck loads of material for these shops come into Newark from New York and into Vineland from both New York and Philadelphia. Under the present organization of the industry it takes very little capital to become a contractor, and shop workers are continually gathering together a few machines, installing themselves in rented quarters, and starting out along with other contractors to solicit orders from manufacturers. As the latter are in the habit of letting their orders day by day, as they come in, to whosoever will accept the lowest price, one contractor's chances of success are as good as another's. When the busy season begins these shops spring up almost over night, new ones appearing and disappearing every year. In the Italian neighborhoods where they recruit their labor supply they are to be seen everywhere, side by side, and often two or three in the same building. Some of them are small places with a scant half dozen workers and others of good size with 100 or more workers. Some are in well-equipped factory buildings of two

<sup>6</sup> Labor, Department of, State of New York: *Home Work in the Men's Clothing Industry in New York and Rochester*, pp. 34, 35.

stories located on a main street, others in rooms above retail stores or in old houses, and still others in dilapidated buildings in alleys and in the rear of dwellings, a sign over the passageway from the street or plastered to the wall of a near-by building the only indication of their presence.

#### THE CONTRACT SYSTEM IN THE WOMEN'S CLOTHING INDUSTRY

As with men's clothing, contractors are used in the manufacture of women's clothing, except that in this industry the contracting goes one step further. The manufacturer, or jobber as he is called in this instance, depends upon the contractor for the making of the garment, but more often than not between the contractor and the home worker there is a subcontractor. This subcontractor is primarily a distributing agent, but he may operate a small shop in his own home, where the home workers come to work under supervision. The subcontractor is not salaried but works independently of the contractor with whom he deals. He may be paid a little more than the home workers who obtain work from the same contractor directly, but in general the rate is the same for both, the subcontractors making what profit they can from the home workers.

#### THE CONTRACT SYSTEM IN OTHER INDUSTRIES

The contract system is found in the production of the many small and inexpensive wares that utilize a large amount of home work. Powder puffs, dolls' clothing, and bead jewelry are produced under this system, but not tags, safety pins, and buttons. Home work on all these articles is markedly subject to changes in production. Along with the fluctuations in fashions, new products are continually appearing and disappearing in the home-work field, and processes sent out by the factory to be done at home are often of short duration. A sudden demand on the market for some article, such as bead necklaces or bracelets, may afford home work to many for a time, but with the decline in popularity of this article the work ceases and may or may not be replaced by work of another kind, depending upon whether or not the next article in favor lends itself to home work. Just as dotted veils, once a fruitful source of home work, have now dropped out of the market, so at the present time the powder-puff industry, which has had an enormous distribution among home workers, is falling off rapidly with the popularity of the compact box, the small compact puff, unlike the loose puff, being wholly a machine-made product.

## THE HOME WORKERS

### NATIONALITY OF HOME-WORKING FAMILIES

Industrial home workers are recruited largely from foreign-born families. (Table 3.) The immigrant woman finds such work easy to secure. Usually it is simple and easily learned by even the most inexperienced, more often than not consisting of some form of needlework, an occupation with which she is quite likely to have been familiar in her own country. Moreover, it does not require contact with the public, in which she is at a disadvantage because of her ignorance of the language and customs of a new country. Coming in contact with it immediately upon her arrival, in the homes of neighbors and relatives, she probably welcomes it as the first means available for earning money to assist the family in getting a start in the new world. Once she has begun she continues to do it and to demand the cooperation of other members of the family even after they have become well established. Many a foreign housewife will explain that home work is a custom in the family and in the neighborhood; that she took it up as soon as she came to this country; that all through her married life she has followed this occupation; and that her children have grown up in the trade. Many of them regret this. As one worker expressed it, "It is a curse; if you learn it you have to do it all your life."

TABLE 3.—*Race and nationality of father in families having children engaged in industrial home work*

Race and nationality of father	Families having children under 16 engaged in industrial home work	
	Number	Per cent distribution
Total.....	628	100.0
White.....	617	98.2
Native.....	46	7.3
Foreign born.....	569	90.6
Italian.....	494	78.7
Polish.....	34	5.4
Other.....	38	6.1
Nationality not reported.....	3	.5
Nativity not reported.....	2	.3
Negro.....	11	1.8

In only 9 per cent of the 628 families included in the study was the father native American. In 91 per cent of the families the fathers were of foreign birth. (Table 3.) This predominance of



foreign families among the home workers was characteristic of each of the seven cities visited. The largest number of native families found doing home work in any one city was in Vineland, but even in that community the father was foreign born in 50 of the 65 families visited.

There is no reason to believe that the proportion of home-working families included in the study in which the father was foreign born was not about the same as the proportion of foreign families among the total number of home workers in each of the cities visited, but exact figures on this point were obtained only for Newark. In Newark the nationality of the fathers of the children reporting in the preliminary canvass, but excluded from the study upon a visit to the homes, was ascertained, as well as that of the fathers of the children interviewed in the course of the study, and a similar proportion (90 per cent of the first group and 91 per cent of the second group) were foreign born. These two groups, which included the fathers of all the children reporting home work in the public schools in Newark, regardless of how long they were employed and whether or not their parents acknowledged their work, may be accepted as representative of the home workers in the city as a whole.

Of the families in the seven cities in which the father was foreign born by far the largest number were Italians. Families of this nationality comprised 87 per cent of all the foreign-born families and 79 per cent of all the families included in the study. Although Italians were conspicuous in all the communities visited except South River and Sayreville, where Russians and Poles predominated, they did not form such an overwhelming majority of the entire foreign-born population as these figures would seem to indicate. In Newark and Paterson, for instance, the two largest cities included in the study, they represented only 23 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, of the foreign born in the general population.<sup>1</sup> But apparently they resort to home work more readily than do the people of other nationalities. In the Italian districts in the cities visited visits to home-working families necessitated almost a house-to-house canvass. It is generally recognized that they have a monopoly of home work in the clothing trades, but they are found in other industries as well. This is not characteristic of New Jersey alone, for in New York, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, where similar studies of industrial home work have been made,<sup>2</sup> Italians were found to predominate among the home workers. It is not possible to explain adequately their preference for this work. It may be due to some extent to the fact that among their people there is a prejudice against women's working outside the home after marriage.

#### MEMBERS OF FAMILY WHO DID HOME WORK

Home work is usually a family activity and persons of all ages and all degrees of skill make up the workers. A very large number

<sup>1</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, vol. 3, Population, pp. 659-660. Washington, 1922.

<sup>2</sup> Third Annual Report of New York State Commission to Examine Laws Relating to Child Welfare, p. 66 (Legislative Doc. (1924) No. 88, Albany, 1924); Industrial Home Work of Children—a study made in Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls, R. I., p. 16 (U. S. Children's Bureau Pub. No. 100, Washington, 1924); Industrial Home Work and Child Labor, p. 10 (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Labor and Industry, No. 11, Harrisburg, 1926); Industrial Home Work in Massachusetts, p. 36 (State Department of Labor Bulletin No. 101, Boston, 1914.)

are children under 16 years of age and mothers. The 628 families visited in the course of the study included 4,353 persons, of whom 1,902 were home workers. Of these, 63 per cent were children under 16 years of age and 27 per cent were married women, mothers of these children. Eighty-five per cent of all the mothers in the families represented in the study were home workers. Usually the mother initiated and directed the work, pressing into service other members of the family that she could coerce or persuade to help. Many of them worked five, six, or seven hours a day at industrial home work in addition to the hours spent in performing their household duties and in caring for the children. Not infrequently mothers reported sitting up until 10, 11, or 12 o'clock during the busy season "to do just one more dozen." Other members of the family, including older brothers and sisters, fathers, and occasional relatives who were members of the family, comprised only 10 per cent of the group.

Older brothers and sisters (16 years of age or over) who helped with the home work, 111 in number, constituted 22 per cent of the boys and girls of this age in the families visited. Of these, 19 were boys and 92 girls. Of the older boys, 5 were still in school, 4 helped only in periods of unemployment, and 10 helped in the evening after their day's work in the factory. Of the older girls, 5 were still attending school, 47 were regularly employed and helped on home work at night, 7 helped in periods of unemployment, and 32 were not otherwise employed and worked on home work both during the day and at night. Of these 32, 3 were too ill for regular employment, 5 were obliged to remain at home to care for the family in the absence or death of the mother, and 24 had taken up home work as a trade, either because they liked it better than other work or because their parents were unwilling to have them work away from home.

Only 38 of the fathers (7 per cent of those in the families interviewed) actually helped with the work. Of those helping, 3 were too ill to engage in regular work, 3 were temporarily unemployed and doing their part to keep the family going by helping with the home work, 24 helped after their regular day's work, and 8 made it their regular occupation. The attitude of the fathers toward home work varied. Some disapproved of the work and "hollered when they saw it around" because of the small returns or because they felt uncomfortable in the atmosphere of a home turned into a factory, some were very indifferent, and others, the large majority, approved and encouraged it for the sake of the earnings.

Home work lends itself readily to the employment of children, and one of its outstanding features is the tendency on the part of the parents to use the children's labor. Processes such as can be sent out from the factory to be done by inexperienced workers without supervision must of necessity be simple at the outset, but in the home, through a division of labor, they are simplified still further, until they are adapted to the abilities of even very young children. In carding safety pins, for instance, children too small to fasten them on the card open the pins in readiness for the more skilled workers. In one household visited by a Children's Bureau agent three children (9, 4, and 3 years of age) opened safety pins, while a grandmother, an aunt, and two children (10 and 9 years of age) carded them. In the same way those not old enough to manage the needle do their

share in turning sleeves of finished coats; dusting, turning, and filling powder puffs; cutting threads from handkerchiefs; and pulling bastings from men's coats and pants. Or they pack Christmas cards in envelopes after they have been sorted by other members of the family, string beads on wire ready for bracelets, etc. A division of labor of this kind, even though the work of the small children may be irregular, speeds up the process to a surprising degree, and the children, commencing in this way, gradually, with increasing years, become more and more skilled until when they reach the age of 14 or more they are completely embroidering a dress, finishing a coat, or doing some such complicated piece of work.

In some instances home work was not a family enterprise. Among the 1,131 children interviewed 109 worked without any assistance from the adult members of the family. Of the children working by themselves, the majority (72) were 12 years of age and over. Forty-three were engaged in beading and embroidering women's dresses, a form of home work that was more profitable than most for individual workers.

#### NUMBER, AGE, AND SEX OF CHILD WORKERS

The children under 16 years of age who were home workers included 1,131 regular workers (that is, children who had worked at least 26 days during the year) and 74 whose work was less significant. The latter were of interest only as embryo workers who as yet were required to work "only a little" but who with increasing years would become regular workers. Of the 1,131 regular workers almost one-fourth were under 10 years of age and more than half were 10 to 13 years of age, inclusive. (Table 4.) Only a little more than one-fifth had reached or advanced beyond their fourteenth birthday. Nineteen children only 6 years of age and 6 even younger were in the group. The children under 6 years of age were, of course, only an insignificant proportion of all the children of those ages in the families visited, but the children 6 to 13 years of age represented 60 per cent of all the children of those ages, and the children 14 and 15 years of age represented 71 per cent of all those of similar age in the same families.

TABLE 4.—*Age and sex of children engaged in industrial home work*

Age	Children under 16 engaged in industrial home work			Age	Children under 16 engaged in industrial home work		
	Total	Boys	Girls		Total	Boys	Girls
Total.....	1,131	311	820	10 years.....	140	44	96
Under 6 years.....	6	2	4	11 years.....	145	33	112
6 years.....	19	3	16	12 years.....	166	40	126
7 years.....	37	22	15	13 years.....	173	45	128
8 years.....	81	33	48	14 years.....	141	30	111
9 years.....	130	46	84	15 years.....	92	13	79
				Not reported.....	1	-----	1

Three out of four of the working children were girls. Parents seemed to look on the work of the girls, even in nonsewing trades, more as a matter of course than that of the boys, probably because they are, as a rule, more amenable to confinement at home. As one mother interviewed said, "You can't do anything with a boy, but just slap a girl and she'll do it." Probably, too, the boys, even while under the legal working age for most kinds of employment, find jobs outside (often illegally) which are more remunerative and which afford more excitement than home work, such as selling newspapers, delivering for stores, and setting up pins in bowling alleys, but the girls can find few jobs outside the home until they reach the age at which they can enter regular employment. Seventy-three per cent of the girls 6 to 13 years of age, inclusive, in the families visited, as compared with 43 per cent of the boys of the same age period in these families, had done home work at least 26 days during the year. Among the children 14 and 15 years of age the difference was even greater—85 per cent of the girls but only 40 per cent of the boys having assisted with the work. In the performance of only one kind of work, stringing tags, did the number of boys approximate the number of girls. Some boys, however, were found engaged in practically all the kinds of work represented in the study, even acquiring some skill with the needle, such as sewing powder puffs, embroidering French knots on dresses, etc. On the whole, the boys included among the home workers were younger than the girls. Of the boys, 33 per cent were 6 to 9 years of age, 52 per cent 10 to 13, and 14 per cent 14 or 15; of the girls, 20 per cent were 6 to 9, 56 per cent 10 to 13, and 23 per cent 14 or 15.

## OCCUPATIONS AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN

### KINDS OF WORK

The 1,131 children interviewed were engaged in about 50 kinds of home work. As a rule each family had confined itself to one kind of work during the period covered by the study. Though they might change from factory to factory in order to secure enough work or because of dissatisfaction with an employer, they usually sought those distributing similar work. Of the 628 families interviewed only 27 reported more than one kind of work during the year, and a few had confined themselves to one variety for 20 to 25 years.

Tables 5 and 6 show the principal kinds of work done by the children and the number, age, and sex of the children engaged in each kind. Though found only occasionally in the localities chosen for this study, the occupations not listed separately in the table should not necessarily be taken as representing unimportant home-work industries, inasmuch as the localities visited were chosen because they afforded a variety of work rather than because they presented a complete picture of particular industries. In other communities these occupations might be represented by much larger numbers to the exclusion of some types of work found in the localities studied.



TABLE 5.—Principal kinds of industrial home work done by children, by age of child

Kind of work	Children under 16 engaged in industrial home work						
	Total	Under 8 years	8 years, under 10	10 years, under 12	12 years, under 14	14 years, under 16	Age not re-ported
Total.....	1, 131	62	211	285	339	233	1
Men's clothing.....	494	43	119	123	124	84	1
Coats.....	470	43	115	119	117	75	1
Pulling bastings.....	270	40	92	68	54	16	
Finishing, sewing collars, and making sleeves.....	180	3	19	46	56	55	1
Cleaning and trimming.....	11		1	3	6	1	
Making buttonholes.....	1					1	
Other.....	8		3	2	1	2	
Pants.....	22		4	4	6	8	
Vests.....	2				1	1	
Women's clothing.....	111		8	27	36	40	
Embroidering dresses.....	87		6	22	27	32	
Beading dresses.....	16		2	1	6	7	
Other.....	8			4	3	1	
Miscellaneous.....	526	19	84	135	179	109	
Powder puffs.....	74	1	13	21	25	14	
Tags.....	69	6	14	21	16	12	
Artificial flowers and ribbon novelties.....	38	1	1	14	15	7	
Lace and embroideries.....	37	1	4	6	18	8	
Doll's garments.....	36	2	8	10	12	4	
Handkerchiefs.....	36	1	3	4	18	10	
Strips for brassieres and corsets.....	24		3	6	7	8	
Bead jewelry.....	22	1	4	5	7	5	
Buttons.....	22		3	8	7	4	
Christmas seals and cards.....	21	2	5	4	6	4	
Safety pins.....	20		5	9	4	2	
Neckties.....	14		5	4	3	2	
Ladies' underwear.....	12		1		7	4	
Baby socks.....	12	2	2	1	4	3	
Other <sup>1</sup> .....	89	2	13	22	30	22	

<sup>1</sup> Includes the following number of children engaged in each specified industry: 9, paper boxes; 9, embroidery floss; 9, fireworks; 8, badges; 8, children's clothing; 7, toys; 4, rags for carpets; 4, swift bands and fliers for silk mills; 3 feathers; 3, hosiery; 3 cards for manicure sets; 3, hats; 2 dye papers; 2, chamois skins; 2, celluloid cards; 2, powder for making soap; 2 hooks for money bags; 2, paper bags; 1, scarfs; 1, ornaments; 1, labels for men's underwear; 1, towels; 1, curtains; 1, garters; 1, spools.

TABLE 6.—Principal kinds of industrial home work done by children, by sex of child

Kind of work	Children under 16 years engaged in industrial home work					
	Total		Boys		Girls	
	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution
Total.....	1, 131	100. 0	311	100. 0	820	100. 0
Men's clothing.....	494	43. 7	148	47. 6	346	42. 2
Coats.....	470	41. 6	143	46. 0	327	39. 9
Pulling bastings.....	270	23. 9	126	40. 5	144	17. 6
Finishing, sewing collars, and making sleeves.....	180	15. 9	11	3. 5	169	20. 6
Cleaning and trimming.....	11	1. 0	4	1. 3	7	. 9
Making buttonholes.....	1	. 1			1	. 1
Other.....	8	. 7	2	. 6	6	. 7
Pants.....	22	1. 9	5	1. 6	17	2. 1
Vests.....	2	. 2			2	. 2
Women's clothing.....	111	9. 8	2	. 6	109	13. 3
Embroidering dresses.....	87	7. 7	2	. 6	85	10. 4
Beading dresses.....	16	1. 4			16	2. 0
Other.....	8	. 7			8	1. 0
Miscellaneous.....	526	46. 5	161	51. 8	365	44. 5
Powder puffs.....	74	6. 5	7	2. 3	67	8. 2
Tags.....	69	6. 1	33	10. 6	36	4. 4
Artificial flowers and ribbon novelties.....	38	3. 4	6	1. 9	32	3. 9
Lace and embroideries.....	37	3. 3	12	3. 9	25	3. 0
Dolls' garments.....	36	3. 2	5	1. 6	31	3. 8
Handkerchiefs.....	36	3. 2	10	3. 2	26	3. 2
Strips for brassieres and corsets.....	24	2. 1	10	3. 2	14	1. 7
Bead jewelry.....	22	1. 9	6	1. 9	16	2. 0
Buttons.....	22	1. 9	9	2. 9	13	1. 6
Christmas seals and cards.....	21	1. 9	7	2. 3	14	1. 7
Safety pins.....	20	1. 8	7	2. 3	13	1. 6
Neckties.....	14	1. 2	4	1. 3	10	1. 2
Ladies' underwear.....	12	1. 1	6	1. 9	6	. 7
Baby socks.....	12	1. 1	4	1. 3	8	1. 0
Other.....	89	7. 7	35	11. 3	54	6. 6

By far the largest number of children (44 per cent) worked on men's clothing. This was to be expected, as the men's clothing industry is one of the largest home work distributing industries in this part of the country and as New York, which is within commuting distance of New Jersey, is its chief center of manufacture in the United States. The next largest group of children (10 per cent) were employed on women's clothing. Although New York is the center for the manufacture of women's clothing as well as men's, home work on women's clothing other than decorating (i. e., beading, embroidering, etc., which is limited to a small part of the production) is confined for the most part to cheap garments that require little work, whereas home work on all grades of men's clothing is common in New York. The remainder of the children included in the study (46 per cent) were engaged on many varieties of work, none of which even approximated in importance the clothing industries in number of children employed.

Following is a description of the more important kinds of home work done by children:

**Men's clothing.**

Four hundred and ninety-four of the children included in the study worked on men's clothing, all but 24 of them on coats. A little more than half did only the simplest work, pulling bastings. The remainder helped with the finishing (doing the harder or simpler parts, according to their ability), lined sleeves, and sewed collars. The number doing the last two kinds of work, however, was small compared to the number doing "finishing." Finishing processes differ both in amount and in quality of work on the three garments that make up the suit. On coats it consists of felling or sewing the sleeve and body lining to the coat at the shoulder seams and neck, down the front, around the bottom if the coat is full lined and up the seams if it is half lined, and around the armholes and cuffs. It may also include felling the collar to the coat and often pulling bastings. Sometimes an extra rate is given and cleaning or trimming required, a process that includes pulling bastings, clipping ravelings, and trimming buttonholes. Some parts of coat finishing are more difficult than others, and only the older children acquire sufficient skill to finish a coat completely. They begin by felling the lining at the cuff, and gradually learn to do, first, the collar; then the shoulder and neck seams; next the sides and bottom; and finally the armholes, which is the most difficult part, as the work must be done smoothly with fine stitches and often is reinforced with a double row of stitching. Children of all ages can pull bastings, and it is seldom that the older members of the family do any of this work. The following description of the work in one family is typical of the manner in which home work on coats is divided among members of the family: The mother and one child, 15 years of age, felled the coat at the shoulder, neck, and armholes; another child, 14 years of age, sewed the cuffs; this same child and two others, 10 and 11 years of age, carried the work to and from the shop; and all three and two still younger (whoever happened to be present when the mother wanted the work done) pulled bastings.

Finishing trousers is simpler than finishing coats. It involves less work and the stitches need not be so fine. It consists of felling the lining around and tacking it along the lower edge of the waist, sewing the lining at the crotch or reinforcing it with tape, and basting and felling the bottoms. It sometimes includes sewing on buttons and tickets, pulling bastings, and trimming; and, as with coats, it is these simpler operations that usually fall to the lot of the younger children.

Finishing on vests consists of felling the lining at the back of the neck and sewing the buckles on the straps. The work is done easily by children, but only two of the families interviewed reported this work.

Other kinds of home work given out by manufacturers of men's clothing included making buttonholes, lining sleeves, and sewing collars—all hand operations. Buttonhole making is difficult and is very seldom done by children. Only two of those included in the study

reported it—a 15-year-old girl whose mother was trying to support the family in this way during the father's illness, and a 14-year-old boy who was learning from his brother (a tailor) preparatory to entering the trade when he should leave school. Lining sleeves consists of fastening the lining to the material with a row of basting along the inside seam, another row around the elbow, and two rows around the cuffs. It includes turning the sleeves and sorting them into pairs ready for delivery. It is done by children as well as adults, the smaller ones often doing only the turning and pairing. Sewing collars consists of sewing together the upper and under sides of the collars across the top and the two sides. It can be done by children, though, as a rule, it is not done by the younger ones.

Because of the ease with which the work on men's clothing can be divided into simple operations, a larger number of young children were engaged in this work than on any other found in the study, fully one-third of them being under 10 years of age and one-tenth under 8. Of the total number of children under 12 years of age engaged in home work, one-half were found in this industry. Boys as well as girls helped, 148 of the 494 children being boys and 346 girls. The work of the boys, however, was almost entirely unskilled, only 13 of their number having reported anything more difficult than pulling bastings; the girls more frequently did the actual sewing. By far the larger part of the men's clothing finished by home workers was distributed by local contract shops which served New York and Philadelphia manufacturers. Only a very few families reported obtaining work from the manufacturer; in each of these cases the factory was a local one and the material not brought from a distance.

#### Women's clothing.

Home work on women's clothing consisted chiefly of crochet beading and embroidery, all but 8 of the 111 children who reported work on women's garments having done one or the other. Of the eight doing other kinds of work, four turned belts of cheap cotton dresses after they had been stitched by other members of the family; one finished cotton dresses, a job that consisted of turning the hems and sewing on belts and buttons; two hemstitched dresses; and one pulled threads preparatory to hemstitching.

Embroidering and crochet beading require more skill than the general run of home work found in this study. The home worker receives the dress or blouse to be decorated in sections already stamped with the design, a pattern including either four pieces (front, back, and sleeves) or three (front and sleeves). These in preparation for working are sewed in wooden frames similar to quilt frames which more often than not are rudely made by the workers themselves. The type of embroidery given out to be done at home, though including most of the ordinary stitches, is usually simple in design and therefore comparatively easy to do, but the beading is more difficult. The beads, strung on a thread of the color of the material, are held to the under side of the work and the bead caught up in a chain stitch with a crochet hook which is punched in and out of the material from the upper side along the pattern; the under side of the material, as placed in the frame, being the right side of the dress when it is completed. Although it is not difficult to learn the stitch used in crochet beading, neatness is essential, and



care must be taken that the hook does not leave a permanent hole in the material. It is said that the eye and nerve strain from continued work of this sort is severe and the workers soon tire from stooping over the frame.

Of the 1,131 children interviewed 16 reported work on crochet beading and 87 on embroidery. Though for the most part these were older children, 2 under 10 years of age had done crochet beading and 6 under 10 had done embroidery. That young children do not help oftener with this work is partly because the parents are unwilling to let them try it, especially if it is to be done on delicate fabrics, as they are usually held responsible for any damage, even to the cost of the entire garment when it can not be repaired. Another reason is that neither type of work is easily broken up into simple operations adapted to the abilities of children of various ages. Though eight children under 12 years of age reported that they had shared the work with the other members of the family, working only the French knots or simple running stitches, as a rule children either did not help at all or did the whole process. Both beading and embroidery require some practice before proficiency is reached. A number of the children reported that they did not do this work in their own homes but only at the shop of the subcontractor, where their work could be supervised. One child stated that she served a regular apprenticeship with the subcontractor and another that she took lessons for two evenings at a cost of \$5 before she began taking work home.

#### **Making powder puffs.**

Sewing powder puffs may involve making the entire puff, or, as is the case with some firms that have installed machines for sewing them together, may consist of merely turning, filling, and closing them. The material as it comes to the home worker consists of circular pieces of velour of the size of the puff, pieces of cotton wadding of the same dimensions for filling, and strips of narrow ribbon for handles or loops. Sometimes the ribbon is supplied in the desired lengths and sometimes the workers must cut it themselves. To make the puff two pieces of velour are put together wrong side out, with the ribbon handle or loop inserted between, and sewed three-fourths of the way around the edge with large, running stitches. The puff is then turned, filled, and closed with overcasting stitches.

All the families reporting work on powder puffs in this study were located in Newark and most of them obtained their work from three local contractors who distributed for New York firms.

Seventy-four children (7 per cent of all those interviewed) reported this work. Not all, however, made the entire puff. Contractors were reported as being particular, and some children attempted only the inside sewing, leaving the closing to more skilled workers. Those not able to manage the sewing operations "dusted" the velour (that is, removed the ravelings from the frayed edges) and put the pieces together in preparation for sewing, or turned and filled the puff ready for closing. Of the 74 reporting this work, 14 were under 10 years of age and 35 (nearly half) were under 12. Seven boys were doing this work. Although the work is not difficult, it can become extremely monotonous when continued for any length of time and the children are always delighted to be rid of it. As one child ex-

pressed it to the Children's Bureau agent, "I hate the sight of a powder puff; they make me sick. I'm glad mother isn't going to do any more of them during the summer. It's just like going on a vacation."

#### Stringing tags.

Stringing tags is easy, unskilled work. The children interviewed reported various kinds of tag stringing. The simplest kind and that most often done by children required only a slipknot in the string at the hole of the tag or only a twist of the wire at the end. Another variety of tag, which was common but which required more work, was strung with a wire inserted through the hole an inch or so, the short end twisted around the long end and bent downward at the back of the tag. Many tags had strings knotted once at the hole of the tag and many had the string knotted twice, in a slipknot at the hole and a hard knot at the end. The string used is sometimes hard and difficult to knot and sometimes soft and pliable, but the worker has no choice as to material—he must accept the assignment as it is given. One other variety of tag known as the "deadlock" was found, but not so frequently as the other varieties. To string this tag the worker merely slips it onto a heavy copper clip, no twisting being necessary. For delivery, all tags must be sorted in bunches of 25, with the strings twisted together so they can not loosen, and packed in boxes—a specified number of bunches to a box. If any of the tags are numbered, as are baggage and express tags, for instance, they must be kept in numerical order when bunched. After packing the boxes must be wrapped and tied together and a sample tag pasted on the outside of the box.

Practically all the tags strung by the children were the product of a Newark manufacturer who distributed only to Newark families. This firm stated that more than three-fourths of the tags sold by them were strung by home workers. In general the families procured their material directly from the firm, but five children reported that they had obtained it from one neighbor, a woman. The firm did not recognize any contractor. This woman was not a regular contractor, in that she did not distribute the work outside her home; she merely obtained an extra supply and encouraged the neighborhood children to come in and help string them, paying from 5 cents to 7 cents per 1,000 less than she received herself. At the time of the bureau agent's visit she had 10 children at work, including 5 of her own.

Tags for stringing are available almost all the year around, although during the summer months the supply is limited because it is the slack season at the factory. The regularity with which the families can obtain them, however, depends to some extent upon the fluctuation in the number of workers applying. As one mother explained, "The work is not seasonal, but there is some work that is not popular, and when that is given out lots of families quit, and then there is lots of work. Other times there is easy work and everybody wants it, and then there is hardly enough to go round."

Tag stringing was reported by 69 of the 1,131 children—33 boys and 36 girls. The number of boys doing this work was second only to the number working on men's clothing. The work being simple,

small children help as well as older ones. Of the 69, 41 were under 12 and 6 were under 8.

#### Artificial flowers.

Children were found working on artificial flowers in North Bergen, Newark, and Paterson. In North Bergen the work was procured from two firms in a neighboring borough which distributed in three or four small towns near by, and in Newark and Paterson from contractors serving New York manufacturers. In North Bergen the work consisted of making paper and cloth flowers and leaves—small bunches of holly, poinsettias set in a whorl of leaves, and sprigs of pine with silver cones for the Christmas trade; and all varieties of small flowers to be used on millinery for the Easter trade. The children's share in the work was confined for the most part to pasting parts of the flower together preliminary to assembling and putting stems on leaves, a process which required merely daubing the wire stem in glue and pressing it against the leaf until it adhered. It is simple work, but care must be taken that the stems are well glued or they might loosen and be sent back to be redone without pay.

In Newark and Paterson the work ran entirely to silk flowers for trimming underwear and novelties, such as vanity boxes, powder bags, and bassinette accessories. They were of all varieties and were made usually of narrow ribbon caught up around a group of stamens or folded to simulate petals. Children who could not make the flowers bunched stamens. A popular form of this work in Newark was rosebud braid. The worker was furnished with a spool of silk braid resembling rickrack, and after making tiny rosebuds by rolling bits of ribbon into shape sewed them onto the braid at regular intervals.

In the three cities 38 children, of whom 6 were boys, reported work on flowers—all but 2 of them 10 years of age or over.

#### Dolls' clothes.

Work on dolls' garments is illegal in tenements but may be carried on in one and two family homes. Of the 19 families doing this work included in the study, 12 were living in tenements and therefore working illegally. (See pp. 1, 62.) In making dolls' clothes the children usually did the minor processes, leaving the sewing, which has to be done by machine, to the older members of the family. Dolls' dresses, together with the necessary trimming, are received by the home worker cut out ready for making. All seams must be sewn, hems turned, and trimming stitched on around the neck and sleeves and sometimes down the front. If bloomers are included with the dresses, or the garments to be made are rompers, elastics must be put in as well. As a rule the home worker, to make as much speed as possible, seams all the dresses in the "batch" at once, passing from one garment to another without cutting the thread. This done, she clips the dresses apart, and in the same manner sews on the trimming. She again clips them apart, trims off the threads, turns them to the right side, presses them when necessary, and packs them ready to be returned to the factory. These last processes—clipping, turning, pressing, and packing—are the parts of the work that usually fall to the children. Of the 36 reporting work on dolls' dresses, only 8 helped with the sewing; 1 was 11 years old, 1 was



12, and the other 6 were 13 or over. Of those doing the simpler processes, 20 were less than 12 and 11 less than 10 years old.

With one exception the home workers doing this type of work procured their work from contractors; the manufacturers furnishing the work were located in New York City. The only contractor who was willing to tell what profit she made reported netting from 2 to 10 cents for each dozen dresses.

Making dolls' dresses soon becomes monotonous, as does all work that is split up into simple, repetitive processes, and complaints of monotony were frequently heard. As one woman exclaimed, "I thought I would go crazy, the work was so tedious."

#### Handkerchiefs.

Handkerchiefs are both scalloped and embroidered by home workers, but of the two kinds of work scalloping was reported more frequently by the children. Handkerchiefs were distributed for scalloping by one firm in North Bergen and two in South River. No contractors were used in this industry, and in every instance the home worker received the initial rate paid by the factory. Although the work is available the year round, it is especially abundant in the spring, from March to May. Handkerchief embroidering, which, as found in this study, consisted of decorating the corners of handkerchiefs that have already been hemstitched in the factory, is machine work entirely. It was found only in South River, where many families, after the manner in which they were accustomed to work in the old country, have established workshops in unused rooms of their homes or in detached sheds in the yard and depend upon this form of home work for their livelihood, the father devoting his entire time to it and the mother and children assisting where they can. No contractors were found in this industry, the home workers receiving their orders directly from factories in Perth Amboy, Camden, and New York City. Work is available during the entire year, but the busy season is the period just preceding Christmas.

The process of scalloping consists of cutting the scalloped edges of handkerchiefs that have previously been embroidered by machine in the factory. The handkerchiefs are embroidered on long strips of material and are cut apart as they are scalloped. Each strip contains 12 dozen and usually 6 or 8 extra to make up the number in case of spoilage. After being scalloped they must be done up in bundles of 1 dozen each, and sometimes they must also be pressed and folded. A special kind of scissors, curved after the manner of manicure scissors, is used for scalloping; and as they must be kept sharp care must be taken that they do not slip and cut into the embroidery. The handkerchiefs may be of silk, linen, or cotton, and of one material and color or of two. Colored voiles with deep borders of embroidered net were a popular variety at the time the study was being made. When two kinds of materials or two colors are combined the home work entailed is greater than when only one material and color is used, as the embroidery joining the contrasting materials or colors must be trimmed as well as the outside edge of the handkerchief.

The equipment for embroidering handkerchiefs is installed by the home worker at his own expense and requires a considerable initial outlay. It consists of two machines, an embroidering machine and a needle-threading machine, the former costing \$1,000 to \$2,000, depend-

ing upon whether it holds 12 dozen or 22 dozen handkerchiefs, and the latter from \$200 to \$300. In addition to the initial expense of the machinery the home worker must buy his own thread, needles, wax, and oil. The women and children usually "set up" the machine, but it is always operated by the father. "Setting up" consists of threading the needles, fitting them into the teeth of the machine, and spanning the handkerchiefs. Needles are threaded in the needle-threading machine, the operation of which is very simple. It consists merely of putting the needles in a frame and turning a wheel that operates the machinery by which the thread is run through the eye. "Spanning" consists of fastening the handkerchiefs in a frame in such a way that the corner to be embroidered is held taut and the remainder of the material folded back out of the way of the needles. To operate the embroidering machine the operator sits in front of it and with one hand guides a stylus across an enlarged pattern of the design to be embroidered, while with the other he turns a wheel which moves the needles back and forth. Every movement of the stylus is reproduced by the needles and the pattern thus duplicated in embroidery on the handkerchiefs. When the embroidery is completed the children again help with the work. They "cut the jump stitch"—that is, trim away the threads left by the needle on the wrong side of the material as it jumps from one part of the pattern to another—remove the handkerchiefs from the frame, and count and bundle them. They also remove the needles from the machine and clean them ready to be rethreaded for the next design.

As would be expected, considering the necessary initial expense, the remuneration for this type of home work is considerably higher than that for most varieties. The rate, which is in accordance with the number of stitches in the design and the number of handkerchiefs to be decorated, varies from 3 to 5 cents per 100 stitches for 1 dozen handkerchiefs.

Thirty-six children reported work on handkerchiefs, 14 helping with the embroidering and 22 with the scalloping. These were for the most part older children, only 8 of the 36 being under 12 years of age. Both scalloping and cutting "jump" stitches, although not difficult, are "ticklish" jobs, as it is easy to cut into the embroidery or snip the handkerchief. They are not trusted, therefore, to the unskilled hands of younger children. Nine of those assisting with the embroidering and only one of those helping with the scalloping were boys.

#### Lace and embroidery.

Lace and embroidery, in the form of edges, insertions, medallions, and scalloped collar and cuff sets, were sent to home workers to be cut from the mesh or muslin into which they are woven. They come from the machine in broad pieces containing a number of strips of edging or insertions, or several dozen medallions or collar and cuff sets which must be cut apart. The work is the same as that entailed in scalloping handkerchiefs. In the case of medallions and insertions only a straight edge has to be followed, but in the case of edgings and collar and cuff sets the material has to be cut away in scallops. After the cutting is completed all ravelings and superfluous threads have to be trimmed away, the edgings and insertions

wound on cards, and the medallions and collars and cuffs bunched in dozens ready for delivery to the buyer. As in scalloping handkerchiefs, curved scissors are required for this work, and these the workers must furnish themselves. As the material is often valuable and a slip of the scissors could do great damage, a charge for damage is often made by the factory in order to insure care on the part of the worker. The practice differs with the different factories. In one "if you spoil a lot you have to pay, but if you spoil just a little the forewoman hollers at you." At another 10 cents is charged for every piece spoiled.

Children cutting laces and embroideries were found in North Bergen, South River, and Sayreville. In all instances the work was distributed directly by the factories. The work is not seasonal but is irregular, depending upon the rate at which factory orders are received. As one mother expressed it, "The work comes by fits and starts. Sometimes there is a lot to be hurried off and sometimes you can take your time."

Among the children reporting home work 37 cut lace or embroidery in one form or another. Of these, 26 were 12 years of age or over. Twelve of them were boys.

#### Brassieres.

Home work on brassieres consists of fastening hooks and eyes on strips of material which are afterwards sewed onto the garment in the factory. The strips come in 24, 36, and 48 yard lengths, and the hooks and eyes are slipped into a fold in the material through an opening left in the stitching, at regular intervals of three-quarters of an inch, 1 inch, or 2 inches. Hooks are slipped in by hand, but for eyes the workers use a simple hand machine which is furnished them by the manufacturer. This machine consists merely of a clamp with an elongated arm terminating in a hook similar to a crochet hook and fitted with a catch that moves backward and forward. The opening in the strip is slipped over this hook and the eye fitted into the catch. With a quick jerk of the material forward the catch springs forward and fastens the eye in the strip. The machine gauges the distance between the eyes and automatically moves the strip up to the proper place. It is simple to operate and the work can be done without the worker's looking at it. One mother who had three children engaged in this work reported that the children usually read while they were doing it.

This work was distributed to the home workers by two manufacturers, both located in Newark. One of these was planning to discontinue the home work in the near future, as he was perfecting a machine that would do the same work inside the factory. Although he planned to give out some work in connection with this machine—the filling of metal tubes with hooks and eyes at a rate of 2 cents a piece—the number of workers who could be supplied would be cut considerably.

In the course of the study 24 children were found who worked on brassiere strips. At first, as one mother reported, the children like to manipulate the machine, but they tire of it eventually and consider it monotonous work. The children doing this work were of all ages from 8 years up. Ten of them were boys.



### Bead jewelry.

Bead jewelry is one of those popular novelties that appear on the market suddenly, last only a short time before their popularity wanes, and finally disappear altogether. At the time of the study home workers were already beginning to mourn the loss of this work which had been available in large quantities earlier in the year. However, though it was not seasonal, it was extremely irregular during its run and could not be depended upon to give steady employment.

Bead jewelry made by home workers who were included in the study consisted of necklaces and bracelets. The necklaces were merely strings of beads of various sizes and colors finished with a clasp, such as are found on the counters of any department store. The bracelets, though almost as simple, required more work. They were formed of spirals of wire, of the proper length to wind around the wrist three or five times, strung with small beads, and finished at the ends with a larger bead. To make the bracelet the worker strings the beads on the wire, bends the ends of the wire to secure the end beads, drops a bit of cement over them, and finishes them with a small metal clamp that both holds and hides the wire. If the clamp is not cemented securely there is danger of its falling off later, in which case the bracelet is returned to the home worker to be done over without pay. Children, therefore, sometimes do only the stringing and leave the cementing to older workers. One contractor visited would not trust this part of the work to the home worker at all, but did it himself. Except for the cementing, the work on both bracelet and necklaces is simple and readily done by children. In fact, they are often more adept at it than their parents, whose hands are clumsy and roughened with work.

All the families found doing this work lived in Newark. All but one obtained the work from the contractors. One Newark firm distributed bracelets directly to the workers, but other firms engaged in this business were located in New York City and depended on contractors for the distribution in New Jersey.

Twenty-two children were interviewed who had worked on bead jewelry, 10 being under 12 years of age. All but 6 were girls.

### Buttons.

Home work in the button industry consisted almost entirely of carding. One family reported stringing buttons on wires for wholesale trade, and one boy and his sister, the latter a regular worker in a button factory, sorted buttons by sizes, but the remainder carded only. This work was distributed directly to the home workers by manufacturers in North Bergen and Newark and was done by families in those localities only.

In addition to being poorly paid this work is very irregular, depending as it does upon the fashions. Work is generally more plentiful in the fall, the busy season in the button industry coinciding with the busy season in the clothing trades. This busy season is always followed by a slump in November and as a rule by a complete cessation of work during December.

Carding is simple, but care must be taken to keep the cards clean, and one worker complained that the glitter from the buttons was so hard on the eyes that after two months of work she forbade her daughter to bring home any more.

Twenty-two children were found who carded buttons, 11 of them under 12 years of age and 9 of them boys.

#### Safety pins.

Safety pins were distributed to home workers for carding and bunching by only one firm. This was located just outside Newark and distributed in the immediate vicinity only. The practice of giving out this work to be done at home was first started during the World War, when there was an increased demand for safety pins, and it proved so profitable that it was continued. At the present time, however, carding as a home process is gradually being discontinued, a new machine having been installed in the factory that will do the work more speedily.

For carding pins the cards came already perforated and the pins sorted but not opened. The worker was furnished with a device, consisting of a block of wood and a clamp with which the card was held firm while the pins were being inserted in the perforations. Twelve pins, four each of three sizes, were put on each card. Bunching pins is easier and more rapid than carding. It consists merely of stringing a number of pins of various sizes on one pin as a holder.

Although the firm distributing this work reported that they had 200 home workers on their pay roll, only 20 children included in the study reported this work. Being poorly paid and extremely tedious, it is not so popular with home workers as some other types. It is disagreeable, too, because the workers are constantly pricking their fingers. The children who worked on safety pins were of all ages. Small children who can not card without breaking or soiling the card can at least open the pins for the other workers, and children of all ages can bunch. Seven of the 20 children doing the work were boys.

#### Delivery of work.

In addition to helping with the work it usually fell to the lot of the children to carry the materials back and forth between the factory and the home. Even those who took no part in the work otherwise were called upon for this. Although some employers, especially in the rush season, assume the responsibility of getting the materials to the worker, 71 per cent of the families included in the study reported that they were obliged to deliver their own materials all the time, and another 8 per cent that they had to do so at least a part of the time. Often this meant carrying heavy loads a mile or more and perhaps up two or three flights of stairs at the end of the trip. A few parents, realizing that this overtaxed the strength of the children, went for the work themselves, but in general the delivery of the work was looked upon as a child's job, unless it had to be done at a time when the children were in school. Sometimes when there were two or three children in the family they were all sent for the work and the weight of the load was shared, but too often the entire assignment was carried by one. An instance was reported by a teacher in the public schools of a child who was suffering with heart trouble and in such bad condition that it had been recommended that she be excused from school permanently. But her parents were so in the habit of sending her to the factory to obtain and deliver bundles of coats that the teacher felt she had much better be sitting in school, though able to do little, than working at home.



In the neighborhoods in which home workers live children can be seen on the streets everywhere—before and after school in the winter and at all hours in the summer—carrying buttons, tags, lace, powder puffs, and the like, but most conspicuous of all are the children in Newark and Vineland staggering along under loads of men's coats or trousers. These garments are not only heavy but bulky and cumbersome to carry, and even a few make a good-sized bundle. The number ordinarily carried at one time depends entirely upon the work that is to be done. If coats are to be "trimmed" each assignment is large because this process takes a comparatively short time. If buttonholes are to be made the assignment is small because the work is slow. An assignment of 10, 12, 15, or 20 coats is usual.

No attempt was made to obtain information about this part of the work from the children in general, but children who carried men's clothing were interviewed on the subject because the assignments were so obviously heavy and hard to carry. Of the 470 children who worked on men's coats 198 had helped with the carrying as well, and 141 children who took no share in the work otherwise did this carrying.

Carrying materials back and forth between the factory and the home is not confined to older children nor to boys, as might be expected. More than half of those "carrying" were under 12 years of age, and about one-fourth were under 10. Three small children 11, 9, and 7 years of age were seen on the street by a bureau agent each carrying at least 20 coats on his head. The bundles so nearly covered the children that from a short distance the coats appeared to be moving along by themselves. These children were carrying for an aunt as well as for their own family.

#### REGULARITY AND DURATION OF WORK

The time spent by the children in industrial home work was extremely irregular, depending largely upon the frequency with which work could be obtained. A few families worked only "now and then" when the inclination struck them or some need arose—perhaps the father lost his job or money was needed for a doctor's bill—but the voluntarily irregular workers were few. Only 178 of the 628 families visited reported that they had been able to obtain as much work as they desired, and of these fully one-third had been regular workers during the entire year. So, although irregularity reflected to some extent the desire of the workers themselves, it was chiefly due to the nature of the industries distributing home work. Many of the industries—the men's clothing industry in particular, in which 44 per cent of the working children interviewed were employed—are seasonal and use home workers, for the very reason that they can be employed irregularly at the will of the manufacturer and thus afford a convenient and economical means of taking care of the expansion and curtailment of business. Other industries are subject to such changes in production, due to changes in fashions, that the home work may be of comparatively short duration. (See p. 13.) Sometimes, too, a new method of production affects home work. At the time of the study women in North Bergen reported that the installation of a machine in the factory

was fast decreasing the amount of available home work in cutting out collars and cuffs, and in Newark some of the women complained that for the same reason they could not get safety pins to card.

Complaints of this irregularity were heard frequently. Whenever work was available the manufacturers sent word to the workers or hung a sign in the factory window or at the gate. They might even deliver the goods to the doors of the workers without previous notification, depending upon them to drop everything and attend to it at once, or, if they could not do it themselves, to distribute it among friends and neighbors. One woman who with the help of her children put pins in button badges reported, "We get work now one, two, or three days a month, but once we had work for three weeks straight. When an order comes to the factory the boss sends from 5,000 to 10,000 buttons and pins to our house in an auto. All of us work very hard to finish the job, and then there is no work again for several weeks." Another mother who worked for three months during the fall and winter on dolls' dresses told a bureau agent that she reported to the factory for work almost every day, sometimes going three times in one day, and that often she was disappointed after standing in line for an hour or more. Still another worker reported that she could get collars and cuffs to sell only when the workers inside the factory could not do them. Her employers sent her 10 or 20 collars or cuffs sometimes three or four times a week, sometimes less frequently.

Of the 1,131 children interviewed 670 (59 per cent) worked both during the school year and during the summer vacation, 395 (35 per cent) worked only during the school year, and 66 (6 per cent) worked only during the summer vacation. It might have been expected that the number of working children would be greater during the summer than during the period when school was in session, but in many of the industries that distributed home work the slack periods fell in the summer, so that, though the children had more time, less work was available.

TABLE 7.—*Frequency of work, by number of months in which child worked*

Frequency of work	Children under 16 engaged in industrial home work								
	Total	Reporting number of months in which they worked						Not reporting	
		Total		1 month, under 4	4 months, under 7	7 months, under 10	10 months, under 12		12 months
		Number	Per cent distribution						
Total.....	1, 131	1, 099	-----	217	265	187	146	284	32
Reporting days per week.....	845	832	100. 0	187	201	136	110	198	13
1.....	2	2	. 2	-----	-----	-----	2	-----	-----
2.....	54	53	6. 4	3	7	17	7	19	1
3.....	88	84	10. 1	18	28	11	7	20	4
4.....	62	62	7. 5	24	11	6	7	14	-----
5.....	308	303	36. 4	49	88	53	42	71	5
6.....	321	318	38. 2	93	63	45	45	72	3
7.....	10	10	1. 2	-----	4	4	-----	2	-----
Not reporting.....	286	267	-----	30	64	51	36	86	19

Because of the irregularity of their work, it was impossible to obtain any reliable information as to the actual number of weeks the children had worked during the year. For 832 of the 1,131 children, however, it was possible to ascertain the number of months in which they had done some work and the number of days a week on which they had usually worked during those months. (Table 7.) Of this number 444 (53 per cent) had worked more than six months and 198 (24 per cent) had worked the entire 12 months every day that work was available. Often they worked on no more than two or three days a week and occasionally on not more than one or two. About three-fourths of the children, whether they had worked in 1 month or in 12, reported working five days or more a week.

## HOURS OF WORK

During the vacation months the children worked more or less irregularly throughout the day, but during the school year their hours were, of course, more restricted. Of the 1,063 children who reported the time when they worked during the school year, 511 (48 per cent) worked only on week days, the majority after school and in the evening, though a few reported having worked early in the morning before leaving for school, and one child even during the noon hour until time to return to school; 485 (46 per cent) worked both on school days and on Saturdays; 20 worked every day in the week, including Sunday; and 32 had obtained working certificates and were no longer attending school. Of these 32, 17 were regularly employed and helped with home work only in the evenings and the other 15 devoted their entire time to it, either being out of work or having been excused from school to help with the household duties. (Table 8.)

TABLE 8.—*Usual time of doing industrial home work during school term*

Usual time of doing industrial home work	Children under 16 engaged in industrial home work	
	Number	Per cent distribution
Total .....	1, 131	-----
Work during school term .....	1, 065	-----
Reporting time .....	1, 063	100. 0
After school only .....	461	43. 4
After school and Saturday .....	440	41. 4
Before and after school .....	50	4. 7
Before and after school and Saturday .....	45	4. 2
After school, Saturday, and Sunday .....	20	1. 9
During school hours (not attending school) .....	15	1. 4
After work (industrial employees) .....	17	1. 6
Other .....	15	1. 4
Not reporting .....	2	-----
No work during school term .....	66	-----

Owing to the irregularity of the work, many children were unable to give any more definite information regarding their hours of work than that they worked "irregularly through the day," "after school,"

or "after supper." Daily working hours were obtained, however, for 715 of the 1,065 children who worked during the school term and for 448 of the 736 children who worked during vacation. (Table 9.) The hours of work on Saturday during the school year could not be ascertained, as, owing to extra household duties, home work was even more irregular on that day than on other week days. Of the children who reported their hours of work during the school year on days when work was available, 372 (52 per cent) usually worked at least two hours and 189 (26 per cent) three hours or more. Two hundred and sixty-three (71 per cent) of the children who worked two hours or more a day worked, as a rule, at least five days a week and some of them six or seven. These hours may not seem long in themselves, but coming at the end of a day in school and in addition to the hours of housework that commonly fall to the lot of girls in working families (the majority of the home workers were girls) they left little or no time for recreation.

TABLE 9.—*Number of hours of industrial home work on a typical working day other than Saturday during school term and during vacation, by age of child at date of interview*

Number of hours of industrial home work on a typical day	Children under 16 engaged in industrial home work							
	Total		Under 8 years	8 years, under 10	10 years, under 12	12 years, under 14	14 years, under 16	Age not reported
	Number	Per cent distribution						
SCHOOL TERM								
Total .....	1, 131		62	211	285	339	233	1
Home work .....	1, 065		58	202	270	319	215	1
Reporting hours .....	715	100. 0	19	116	181	234	161	1
Under 1 hour .....	116	16. 2	4	35	36	32	9	
1 hour, under 2 .....	227	31. 7	8	35	72	69	43	
2 hours, under 3 .....	183	25. 6	5	26	35	63	54	
3 hours, under 4 .....	96	13. 4	1	12	21	35	27	
4 hours, under 5 .....	55	7. 7		5	11	22	16	1
5 hours and over .....	38	5. 3	1	3	9	13	12	
Not reporting hours .....	350		39	86	86	85	54	
No home work .....	66		4	9	15	20	18	
SUMMER VACATION								
Total .....	1, 131		62	211	285	339	233	1
Home work .....	736		35	139	186	233	143	
Reporting hours .....	448	100. 0	9	75	119	154	91	
Under 1 hour .....	74	16. 5	2	24	23	19	6	
1 hour, under 2 .....	97	21. 7	1	17	37	28	14	
2 hours, under 3 .....	99	22. 1	3	13	18	42	23	
3 hours, under 4 .....	49	10. 9		7	10	20	12	
4 hours, under 5 .....	54	12. 1	1	11	14	13	15	
5 hours, under 7 .....	45	10. 0	1	1	12	19	12	
7 hours and over .....	30	6. 7	1	2	5	13	9	
Not reporting hours .....	288		26	64	67	79	52	
No home work .....	395		27	72	99	106	90	1

Moreover, even for children working less than three hours a day home work frequently meant night work. Of the 1,033 children who worked during the school year and reported as to night work,



475 (45 per cent) said that it was customary for them to work in the evening after supper whenever work was available. (Table 10.) Reliable information as to the hours usually worked at night, however, could be obtained for only 336 of the 475. Of these 336, 153 (46 per cent) reported that they usually worked two hours or more and 67 (20 per cent) three hours or more, the large majority of these having been employed at least five days a week, more often six. One hundred and forty-two children, of whom 108 usually worked at least five days a week, reported that they were accustomed to work as late as 9 o'clock, and 52, of whom 40 worked at least five days a week, said that it was quite usual for them to work as late as 10 o'clock. Twenty children reported working until 11 o'clock or later, of whom all but 6 worked at least five days a week.

TABLE 10.—*Number of hours of industrial home work on a typical working night other than Saturday during school term and during vacation, by age of child at date of interview*

Number of hours of work on a typical night	Children under 16 engaged in industrial home work							
	Total		Under 8 years	8 years, under 10	10 years, under 12	12 years, under 14	14 years, under 16	Age not reported
	Number	Per cent distribution						
SCHOOL TERM								
Total .....	1, 131	-----	62	211	285	339	233	1
Work during school term .....	1, 065	-----	58	202	270	319	215	1
No night work .....	558	-----	36	114	149	162	97	-----
Night work .....	475	-----	18	80	114	151	111	1
Hours reported .....	336	100.0	9	48	76	119	83	1
Under 1 hour .....	35	10.4	1	8	10	10	6	-----
1 hour, under 2 .....	148	44.0	5	21	31	50	41	-----
2 hours, under 3 .....	86	25.6	2	12	19	34	19	-----
3 hours, under 4 .....	45	13.4	-----	6	10	15	13	1
4 hours, under 5 .....	16	4.8	1	1	3	7	4	-----
5 hours and over .....	6	1.8	-----	-----	3	3	-----	-----
Hours irregular or not reported .....	139	-----	9	32	38	32	28	-----
Night work not reported .....	32	-----	4	8	7	6	7	-----
No work during school term .....	66	-----	4	9	15	20	18	-----
SUMMER VACATION								
Total .....	1, 131	-----	62	211	285	339	233	1
Work in summer vacation .....	736	-----	35	139	186	233	143	-----
No night work .....	445	-----	22	90	117	138	78	-----
Night work .....	251	-----	11	42	60	83	55	-----
Hours reported .....	140	100.0	3	18	32	54	33	-----
Under 1 hour .....	9	6.4	-----	1	3	4	1	-----
1 hour, under 2 .....	59	42.1	2	6	14	22	15	-----
2 hours, under 3 .....	45	32.1	1	7	9	18	10	-----
3 hours, under 4 .....	18	12.9	-----	3	4	6	5	-----
4 hours, under 5 .....	2	1.4	-----	-----	-----	1	1	-----
5 hours and over .....	7	5.0	-----	1	2	3	1	-----
Hours irregular or not reported .....	111	-----	8	24	28	29	22	-----
Night work not reported .....	40	-----	2	7	9	12	10	-----
No work in summer vacation .....	395	-----	27	72	99	106	90	1



The proportion of children reporting three hours or more of work was greater among those working during the vacation months than among those working during the school term. It was not so much greater, however, as might have been expected, considering the additional hours of freedom enjoyed by the children, the explanation probably being the same as that for the smaller number of children working in this period, that is, that there is less work during the summer months than at other times of the year. Of the 448 children reporting their hours of work in this season when work was available 62 per cent usually worked two hours or more a day and 40 per cent three hours or more, as compared with 52 per cent and 26 per cent of those reporting their working hours during the school year. Night work, however, was reported a little less frequently, only 34 per cent of the children who worked during the summer months and reported as to night work having worked after supper as compared with 45 per cent of those working during the school year. Night work in the summer months, however, is hardly comparable with night work at other seasons of the year because the greater part of it is usually done out of doors in daylight hours, few children having reported work later than 9 o'clock (daylight-saving time), whereas in the winter months it meant working the entire time by artificial light, in a closed room where the entire family congregated in order to save the expense of heating other rooms. Furthermore, in the winter night hours often meant a tired child for school the next day.

The number of children reporting three hours or more was considerably smaller at both seasons of the year in Newark than in the other cities—even less than in Vineland, where the bulk of the home work was of the same type as that done in Newark, the finishing of men's clothing. In Newark only 20 per cent of the 496 children reporting hours of work during the school year and only 36 per cent of the 331 reporting for the vacation period had worked as much as three hours or more a day, whereas in the other cities combined 40 per cent of the 219 reporting for the school year and 51 per cent of the 117 reporting for the vacation period had worked three hours or more. It is believed, however, that the parents in Newark understated the working hours of their children, being more on their guard against giving information that might injure their chances of continuing with the work than the parents in smaller communities where home work was not done on so large a scale, probably because they had felt more keenly than the latter the special effort made in 1923 to enforce the sweatshop laws.

In addition to the time spent in actually doing home work considerable time was consumed by the children in going back and forth to the factory for work. At many factories, especially in the rush season, considerable time was wasted even after the factory was reached in waiting for the work to be distributed, and not infrequently the round trip consumed as much as an hour or more.

Older children generally worked longer than younger ones. Of the 715 children that reported their hours of work during the school year, 32 per cent of those 12 years of age or over, as compared with 20 per cent of those under 12 years of age, had worked three hours or more a day, and of the 448 that reported their hours of work

during the vacation months, 46 per cent of the older group, as compared with 32 per cent of the younger, had worked three hours or more. The younger children worked shorter hours, partly because they could not concentrate for longer periods and partly because many of the minor processes, which were the only parts of the work that they were capable of doing, took less time than those done by the older children and the adult members of the family. Pulling bastings, for instance, was speedier work than felling coats and turning powder puffs was quicker than sewing them. Somewhat fewer younger children had night work. Of the children under 12 years of age the percentage working at night was 31 during vacation and 40 during the school year, whereas of the children 12 years of age and over the percentage working at night was 37 during vacation and 49 during the school year.

#### ILLUSTRATIVE CASE STORIES

All sorts of methods were used to keep the children at work. Some parents set definite assignments for them to do each day (one mother put each of her three children in a separate room and made them stay there until their assignments were completed); some coaxed the children with bribes of a few pennies, a new pair of shoes, or other presents; others kept up their interest and enthusiasm by arousing a spirit of rivalry among different members of the family; one mother used home work as a means of punishment; and a few said that they even "beat the children if they didn't work." A few accounts of the work of individual children which are representative of the working children as a whole will illustrate perhaps more clearly than figures the conditions under which the children worked.

Every afternoon after school for five months the five P. children, aged 4, 8, 10, 11, and 14, helped their sister-in-law to make dolls' dresses. The older children worked from 3.30 to 5 o'clock in the afternoon and from 6 to 9 o'clock after supper, and the 4-year-old child worked half an hour in the afternoon and an hour in the evening. The three younger children were given only the simple part of the work, which consisted of turning the dresses and trimming the threads; but the two older girls helped to sew the garments as well. The sister-in-law reported that it was only with the help of the children working regular hours every day that she could make the work pay. She expressed a desire to secure a simpler kind of work such as powder puffs or tags and have all the children in the neighborhood help, "as they are always willing to do it if you pay them a little bit."

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When her husband's work became irregular with the advent of the winter months and the family were "running behind in their expenses" Mrs. I. decided to have her children help with the family expenses by stringing tags. She and her husband helped with the counting and packing, but all the stringing was done by three children 8, 10, and 12 years of age. From four to six days a week, after school until supper time, after supper from 7 to 9 o'clock, and on Saturdays for two hours in the forenoon, the children were required to string tags. At the time the family was visited by the Children's Bureau agent they had been doing the work for six months, though the father had been working steadily for some time. In three and one-half hours each child was able to earn approximately 21 cents.

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At the time of the bureau agent's visit home work had just been discontinued in the S. family upon the advice of the family physician, who felt that the mother was overtaxing her strength. Previous to that time, every day after

school and on Saturdays, four children 7, 9, 11, and 13 years of age had finished coats under the direction of their mother. The two younger children, whose work was confined to pulling bastings, worked only a short time each day, usually half an hour in the evening and irregularly whenever their services were needed during the day; but the older children, who were able to do the felling, were expected to help four or five hours a day. On school days they usually worked from 3.30 to 5 in the afternoon and from 7 to 10 at night. On Saturdays their hours were irregular throughout the day, but in the evening, as on week days, they worked from 7 to 10 o'clock. The mother explained that they had not worked the entire year because from December to March the factory had not given out any work.

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At the time of the study 11-year-old Mary, her brother 10 years of age, and her two sisters only 9 and 6 years old had been helping their mother string tags for six months to eke out their father's meager income. Sometimes a day passed without any tags in the house, but as a rule the children worked every day except Sunday. As soon as school was dismissed for the afternoon they gathered around the large table in the living room and strung tags until supper time. In the evening the three older children worked again for half an hour. On Saturday all four children worked for three hours, one hour in the forenoon and two in the afternoon. Their mother explained that previously to working on tags she had embroidered ladies' dresses, but although she made a little more money at that work she preferred to do the tags because the children could help and when she worked on dresses she had to do all the work herself and was constantly worried as to whereabouts of the children. Though two of the children who did home work had been transferred to the open-air room by the school authorities, the mother failed to realize that home-work was not to their best interest. So intent was she upon giving them more comfortable surroundings that she failed to count the cost.

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Mrs. M. was much concerned because her three children were pale and thin. She condemned other mothers in the neighborhood who allowed their children to work on the truck farms in the vicinity and talked of the amount of child labor in the community in which she lived, but did not realize that it was bad for her own child, only 8 years of age, to sit in the house from four to six hours a day folding wrappers for torpedoes. Mrs. M.'s intentions were of the best, and she tried to take good care of her children, but she looked upon home work as a pastime. Mr. M. was opposed to his wife's activities, as he felt that the 30 cents an hour made by the mother and child was not worth the time and energy spent. Mrs. M., however, found it difficult to manage for a family of five on \$1,760 a year, and was continuing to do the work, hiding it when her husband was around.

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The G. family bent all their efforts toward making money, although they were in no financial need. Not satisfied with renting the basement and the second floor of their home, which they owned, the family of eight crowded together in three of the rooms on the first floor and rented the fourth to a lodger. Mrs. G. as well as her husband went out to work every day, and the father, in addition to his regular work as a laborer for the city, found time to run errands for the bead-jewelry contractor who rented the basement of their home for his shop and to make bead bracelets at night with the aid of three older children, aged 13, 11, and 9. The 13-year-old girl, who was attending high school and was free from classes during the morning, worked regularly from 10 to 12, and all three children worked from 7 to 9 each night. Together they averaged about 20 cents an hour. Laziness was the quality most disliked in the family. The 11-year-old girl, who "was smart in school," was looked down upon because she would not string beads without being bribed by the promise of presents, and because when she did work she could not accomplish as much as her 9-year-old sister, who "was not so smart in school."



Much of the burden of the support of the J. family fell upon 13-year-old Katie. The father had died two years before the study, leaving the family with a grocery store and a home, both heavily mortgaged. The sale of the store brought no money, and the rents from tenants in the house barely covered the payments due on the mortgage. Mrs. J., to care for herself and two children (Katie and a small boy 7 years of age), worked in a tailor shop during the day and finished trousers at night. A grown daughter and a son and his wife lived with Mrs. J., but the son was an invalid and a care rather than a help. The daughter and daughter-in-law both worked, but their contributions were not enough for the support of the family. Every moment that she was free from school Katie helped her mother. All day in the summer and after school until 6 o'clock during the school year, except on Mondays and on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, she worked with her at the tailor's shop (although violating the child labor law in so doing), and whenever work was available helped to finish trousers at home at night. During the busy months (May, June, October, November, and December) she and her mother worked regularly at night. Katie never worked later than 9 o'clock, but the mother kept at it until 10 or 12. At other times of the year they had home work only occasionally, when the work at the shop could not be finished during the day. As her mother suffered from rheumatism and her hands were badly swollen, much of the care of the 7-year-old brother and the housework, particularly the washing, fell upon Katie. Mrs. J. was devoted to her children and kept them clean and well dressed.

In some instances the hours reported were extreme, 38 children having reported doing home work at least five hours a day in addition to their work at school, 12 of these children six hours or more.

One mother had established a veritable factory in her home. All her energies were concentrated on getting as much home work done as possible each day. Every day before school in the morning from 7 to 8 o'clock, after school until supper time, and from 7 to 10 in the evening the three children, 8, 10, and 12 years old, were obliged to help fell and trim trousers. In the evening after their day in the factory two boys, 14 and 16 years of age, were obliged to help also, although the mother complained that the 14-year old boy was often so tired after work that he could hardly eat his supper and that the father frequently had to beat the 16-year old boy to make him work. The mother said that sometimes she "let the children out after supper until 8 or 9 o'clock and that they "usually had Sundays," but the rest of the time they worked.

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In another family the mother had never done home work until the year of the study, when, hearing of a factory where they were giving out beads to be strung into bracelets, she applied for work. This was a new product on the market, and her earnings, which were exceptionally high, quite overwhelmed her. Never before had she had so much money to spend. "If you make extra you spend more," she exclaimed, and every spare minute of herself and her children was devoted to "making extra." After school in the afternoon and every evening until 11 o'clock, on Saturdays and Sundays as well as on week days, the three children, 6, 8, and 10 years of age, strung beads on wires, the mother using corporal punishment when necessary to keep them at work. These hours were kept up for three or four weeks until the work at the factory gave out, since which time, discouraged at not being able to find any other work that paid so well, the mother has not taken home work.

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In still another family two girls, 13 and 12 years of age, with their mother, father, and a brother 16 years of age, bottled, capped, labeled, and boxed powdered soup which the father brought from the factory. From 4.30 to 5 every afternoon after school the two girls put the cardboard boxes together and after supper, when the father and older brother were home to fill the bottles, they capped, labeled, and packed them from 7 to 11.30. On Saturdays they made boxes from 10 to 11.30 in the morning and from 1 to 3.30 in the afternoon, doing the other work as usual in the evening. This was done six days a week for eight weeks in the spring of the year while the children were still attending school.

## EARNINGS OF HOME WORKERS

Earnings from industrial home work were exceedingly low. Manufacturers make use of home workers because they can pay them less than factory workers; and home workers, anxious to eke out a meager family income and having no other work to which they could turn in the interim of household duties, not only accept the low wages in preference to none but accept them very much as a matter of course. Competition among families to obtain the work aids in keeping down wages and even in lowering them. According to the statement of one of the home workers, if contractors and manufacturers putting out a new type of home work found that the home workers were making good wages they reduced the rate until the earnings did not exceed 10 cents an hour. However true this may be, in several instances the rate on home work had been reduced within the year. The rate for assembling parts of mechanical toys, starting at 10 cents a gross, was reduced shortly to 8 cents, and similarly bead bracelets were reduced in one instance from 45 to 40 cents a dozen and in another from 50 cents to 14 cents. Yet manufacturers reported almost universally that they had no trouble in obtaining home workers—that women begged for the work and commonly there was not enough to go around. Consequently, as a mother explained, "There is no use in complaining, the boss always says you're not forced to take the work if you don't like it. He can get plenty of women who will." The workers had fallen into the mental attitude expressed by one woman found carding safety pins, who said, "We don't get much for all the hard work, but we're lucky to get any work at all."

## RATES OF PAY

The rates of pay depended upon the amount of work to be done on the articles being distributed, but even when the work entailed was the same they varied to some extent with the different employers, some requiring more operations on an article than others. Following are the rates of pay for the principal kinds of work in which the children were found engaged, as stated by the parents of the children.

## Men's clothing.

For work on men's clothing the rates of pay were not at all uniform. They varied with the type of garment, the quality of the work required, and the number of operations included in the felling processes. Coats brought a higher rate than trousers or vests; full-lined coats brought more than half or quarter lined; and those of a better-grade material, which require finer and more careful work, brought more than those of the cheaper grades. When finishing included several operations, such as sewing on the collar and reinforcing the armholes with a double row of stitching, as well as tacking in the body lining, the rate was higher than for the one operation alone. For sack coats the rates ranged from 8 cents to 30 cents per coat, the lowest rate being paid for the unlined coat manufactured for southern markets and the highest for the full-lined one of expensive materials. Rates for overcoats were proportionately



higher, averaging from 20 cents to 40 cents per garment. For finishing trousers rates ranged from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cents to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  cents a pair for the cheaper grade, which are largely machine made, to 35 cents a pair for the better grade, which require more hand work. Finishing vests brought from 1 cent to 2 cents per garment. Rates for work other than finishing were more uniform. For sewing separate collars the rate was from 2 cents to 5 cents per collar and for lining sleeves 3 cents to 4 cents per pair. For pulling bastings, when it was not included in the price for finishing, and for trimming it ranged from 2 cents to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  cents per garment.

#### **Women's clothing.**

The rate of pay for work done on women's clothing (embroidery and beading) varied considerably in busy and slack seasons but depended always upon the amount of work in the pattern and the quality of material used, delicate fabrics bringing the higher prices. In beading the number of colors necessary was also taken into consideration. The subcontractor and the home workers who deal directly with the contractor are paid on a piecework basis, the actual amount given for each garment being determined by the time it takes a sample worker in the factory to do an identical piece of work. Complaints were heard again and again as to the unfairness of this method because the sample worker is experienced and, therefore, a much more rapid worker than the home worker. One contractor, who may be considered typical, stated that, figuring at the speed of the sample worker, he aimed to pay from 25 cents to 60 cents an hour, depending upon the season, for crochet beading and from 15 cents to 35 cents an hour for embroidery. None of the contractors visited offered any more or any less than these extremes, but the actual rate varied somewhat with each. However, the majority of the families included in the study obtained their work from subcontractors and therefore received a lower rate of pay. One such distributor of home work reported that she paid her workers 10 cents to 15 cents less per garment than she received from the contractor. Another reported a profit of 5 cents to 10 cents on cheap dresses, but as much as \$1 on dresses for which she received \$5, and one or two reported a uniform profit of 10 per cent on each garment.

#### **Powder puffs.**

For making powder puffs the rate of pay varied from 30 cents to \$1.25 per gross, depending upon the size of the puff and whether it has to be sewn entirely by hand or simply closed. One contractor reported that the most popular puff with the home worker was one  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches in diameter, which paid \$1 per gross when made completely by hand.

#### **Stringing tags.**

The rates for stringing tags were especially low. Tags strung with string requiring only a slipknot at the hole of the tag and tags strung with wire requiring only a twist of the wire at the end were paid for at the rate of 14 cents per 1,000. Where the wire is inserted through the hole only an inch or so and the short end twisted around the longer end at the hole of the tag and bent downward back of the tag

the rate was 16 cents per 1,000. Tags with the string knotted once at the end brought 18 cents per 1,000 and those with the string knotted twice—in a slipknot at the hole and a hard knot at the end—brought 20 cents per 1,000. If any of these varieties are numbered, such as express tags and baggage checks, and have to be kept in consecutive order an extra 4 cents was paid on every 1,000. For the “deadlock,” the tag that is merely slipped onto a heavy copper clip, the rate was lower than for other varieties—12 cents per 1,000.

#### **Artificial flowers.**

Rates for artificial flowers varied greatly. For paper or cloth flowers families received from 15 to 90 cents per gross; for attaching stems to leaves and flowers, 4 to 13 cents per gross, the higher rate being paid for the larger leaves and more difficult flowers and for rush orders; for ribbon flowers, 30 to 55 cents per gross; and for sewing rosebuds on braid, 80 cents, \$1, and \$1.10 per 36 yards, the price increasing with the increase in the number of buds per yard.

#### **Dolls' garments.**

Rates of pay on dolls' clothing varied not only with the amount of work required but also with the quality of the garment. Those quoted by the manufacturer giving out the work ranged from 1 cent a dress to \$1.75 per dozen, while those quoted by the home workers interviewed in the course of the study ranged from 4 cents per dozen to \$1.25 per dozen. One family which made elaborate outfits of the kind found on dolls given out for prizes at amusement parks reported a rate of \$1.40 per 3 dozen outfits—the outfit consisting of hat, dress, and bloomers. For the rest of the families visited, however, the rate received during the year of the study did not exceed 30 cents per dozen.

#### **Handkerchiefs.**

The rates for scalloping and embroidering handkerchiefs differed greatly. As would be expected, considering the necessary initial expense, the remuneration for embroidering was considerably higher than for scalloping or for any other form of home work encountered in the study. The rate, which is in accordance with the number of stitches in the design and the number of handkerchiefs to be decorated, varied from 3 to 5 cents per 100 stitches for 1 dozen handkerchiefs. One family had just finished an assignment of 66 dozen at the time of the bureau agent's visit, for which they were to be paid \$14.95. The rate for that particular design was 3 cents per 100 stitches per dozen handkerchiefs, and it had taken a day and a half to complete the job. Rates for scalloping vary with the intricacy of the design, ranging from 3 to 65 cents per dozen handkerchiefs. Those which bring the higher price, however, are usually too difficult to be done by children. The children included in the study all worked upon the simple kinds, for which a rate of 5 or 6 cents per dozen was paid—the kind that are sold in variety stores for 10 cents each. There are six or eight extra handkerchiefs included in the strip for which the home workers receive no pay, the manufacturer claiming that he gets no pay for them but must throw them in as extras to make up the number in case any imperfect ones are found.

**Lace and embroidery.**

As with other kinds of work that could be spoiled easily, the rates paid for cutting lace and embroidery varied with the value of the material as well as the amount of work entailed. The work done by children was largely of the cheaper varieties, since a charge was made for damages and the parents were unwilling to trust them with the better pieces. In general, the rate received for cutting edges and insertions was 1 cent to 5 cents per strip, the strips being sometimes 10 yards in length and sometimes 15. Two children, however, one 14 and the other 12 years of age, reported a rate of \$4 for a 10-yard strip of applique embroidered on crêpe de chine, the pattern to be cut being an elaborate leaf design. The rate for cutting medallions was from  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent to 2 cents per dozen. That for collar and cuff sets was quoted for the separate pieces and not for the set—3 cents to 5 cents per dozen for collars and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 cents per dozen for cuffs. Only one family reported a rate by the set, and that extremely low—4 cents per dozen.

**Brassieres.**

Rates for putting hooks and eyes on strips for brassieres varied from 6 to 10 cents for a 24-yard length and from 17 to 18 cents for a 48-yard length, the exact amount in each case depending upon the size of the hook and eye and the intervals at which they had to be set. A 24-yard strip with the hooks and eyes set an inch apart brought 10 cents per strip, which means that for every 864 hooks set the worker received 10 cents.

**Bead jewelry.**

The rates on necklaces obtained from contractors only ranged from 1 to 15 cents per necklace, depending upon the size of the bead and the length of the string. For a necklace 15 inches in length, strung alternately with large and small beads, the worker received 3 cents. For bracelets the rate offered by contractors ranged from 6 to 30 cents per dozen. The usual rate, however, was 20 cents per dozen for three "winds" or spirals (18 inches) and 30 cents per dozen for five "winds" (26 inches). Workers dealing directly with the factory received from 15 to 40 cents per dozen for bracelets, but, as was stated before, only one family included in the study received their work in this way.

**Buttons.**

The rate of pay for carding buttons varied with the size and kind of button, the larger button and the larger card to which they are fastened being heavier and more cumbersome to handle and the shank buttons being more difficult to card than the bored button, or, as the workers term it, the "sew-through" button. The rate paid ranged from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 12 cents per gross of buttons. Complaint was heard that the work paid poorly and that if any buttons were lost no pay was received for any of the work.

**Safety pins.**

The rate of pay for carding and bunching safety pins was very low. In carding, it varied with the size of the pin (the larger pin being easier to handle than the smaller), and ranged from 25 cents

to 35 cents for 100 gross of cards. For bunching pins the rate was 3 cents per pound, there being approximately 450 pins to a pound.

#### HOURLY EARNINGS OF THE CHILDREN

Because home work is usually a family activity, it proved difficult to obtain information as to the children's earnings. Aside from the fact that the children, especially the younger ones, often did only a minor part of the work, another difficulty lay in the fact that the home-working families seldom thought of the work in terms of individual earnings—the accrued earnings at the end of the day being all that counted. Moreover, many of the children worked so irregularly and for such short periods at a time that it was impossible to estimate the amount they did in a given time. Where regular assignments were required of the children or when rivalry among different members of the family was encouraged to speed up the work or when the children themselves took some pride in the amount they could do it was possible to obtain some information, and an estimate of the maximum amount that they could earn in an hour was obtained for 356 of the 1,131 children included in the study. (Table 11.) Of these, 42 children (12 per cent) earned less than 5 cents an hour when working at their best speed, 13 earning less than 3 cents. One hundred (28 per cent) reported an earning capacity of between 5 and 10 cents an hour, and only 117 (33 per cent) earned as much as 15 cents. The earnings quoted are largely those of older children, 255 (72 per cent) of the 356 being 12 years of age or over. The earnings of the younger children were relatively less. Of the 101 under 12 years of age reporting as to their earnings 55 earned less than 10 cents an hour.

TABLE 11.—*Maximum hourly earnings from principal kind of industrial home work, by age of child at date of interview*

Maximum hourly earnings	Children under 16 engaged in industrial home work										
	Total		Under 8 years <sup>1</sup>	8 years, under 10 <sup>1</sup>	10 years, under 12		12 years, under 14		14 years, under 16		Age not reported
	Number	Per cent distribution <sup>1</sup>			Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number
Total.....	1, 131		62	211	285		339		233		1
Reporting earnings.....	356	100.0	7	30	64	100.0	129	100.0	126	100.0	
Under 5 cents.....	42	11.8	1	7	9	14.1	17	13.2	8	6.3	
5 cents, under 10.....	100	28.1	4	13	21	32.8	36	27.9	26	20.6	
10 cents, under 15.....	97	27.2	1	5	19	29.7	41	31.8	31	24.6	
15 cents, under 20.....	46	12.9		3	9	14.1	11	8.5	23	18.3	
20 cents, under 25.....	37	10.4	1	1	5	7.8	13	10.1	17	13.5	
25 cents, under 30.....	13	3.7					4	3.1	9	7.1	
30 cents and over.....	21	5.9		1	1	1.6	7	5.4	12	9.5	
Not reporting earnings.....	761		55	178	216		206		105		1
No earnings.....	14			3	5		4		2		

<sup>1</sup> Per cent distribution not shown where base is less than 50.



## HOURLY EARNINGS OF FAMILIES

Since the family group rather than the individual is the working unit in most families, information was obtained as to the hourly earnings of the group whenever possible. Three hundred and sixty-eight of the 628 families interviewed were able to report on this point. As in the case of individual earnings, the amounts quoted represent the maximum and not the usual or average amount earned in one hour. Although the number of workers in a group ranged from two to six persons and with 13 exceptions included at least one adult and frequently two, only 48 families (13 per cent) earned as much as 50 cents an hour and only 80 (22 per cent) as much as 40 cents an hour. The higher earnings were not confined to any one industry. Of the 48 families reporting an earning capacity of 50 cents or more an hour 17 had worked on men's clothing, 9 on women's dresses (beading and embroidering), and the remaining 22 on various kinds of work. The following examples of the hourly family earnings of the home workers are typical:

The mother, two daughters, 15 and 11 years of age, and two boys, 13 and 9 years of age, in the A. family cut lace. For cutting and winding the lace on cardboard they were paid  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cents for a 15-yard strip. The mother and girls could each cut three strips and the boys one and one-half strips in an hour. Additional time was required for winding. The mother and girls earned about 9 cents each for their hour's work and the boys 5 cents each.

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The mother in the R. family "sewed coats," assisted by her 11-year-old daughter. Working alone the mother "made a 15-cent coat" in an hour, but with the help of her daughter she could do a "22-cent coat" in the same time.

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In the S. family the father, mother, a grown boy and girl, and three children, 9, 10, and 14 years of age, cut out collars and cuffs. The father and mother and older brother cut at the rate of 8 dozen pieces an hour each; the others cut  $1\frac{1}{2}$  dozen pieces an hour. There were 60 dozen pieces to a strip, for which \$1.50 was paid. With these members of the family cutting and two other children, 8 and 5 years of age, counting and "bunching" the family could finish a strip in two hours, the hourly earnings for nine persons thus being 75 cents. Their largest week's earnings within the year before the study were \$11.

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Much against the wishes of the father in the N. family, the mother and two children, 10 and 13 years of age, made powder puffs. The mother and older girl sewed the puffs while the younger child stuffed them with cotton. The older girl could sew a dozen puffs in an hour and her mother 9. The three workers took almost seven hours to complete a gross, for which they received 75 cents.

## ANNUAL EARNINGS OF FAMILIES

Information on yearly earnings from home work was obtained from 334 of the families interviewed. These earnings and the composition of the group which had helped with the work during the year are shown in Table 12. One hundred and fifty-two (46 per cent) of the families had earned less than \$100 and 76 (23 per cent) less than \$50.



TABLE 12.—*Annual earnings from industrial home work, by composition of working group*

Annual earnings from industrial home work	Families having children under 16 engaged in industrial home work										
	Total		Composition of working group								
	Number	Per cent distribution	Children only	One adult and—			2 adults and—			Other combinations	Inapplicable (individual workers) and group earnings not reported
				1 child	2 children	3 to 5 children	1 child	2 children	3 children		
Total.....	628	-----	10	132	87	52	14	14	19	6	294
Reporting earnings.....	334	100.0	10	132	87	52	14	14	19	6	-----
Under \$50.....	76	22.8	4	28	22	9	2	1	7	3	-----
\$50, under \$100.....	76	22.8	3	35	18	7	5	3	4	1	-----
\$100, under \$200.....	76	22.8	2	34	18	12	2	3	4	1	-----
\$200, under \$300.....	63	18.9	1	23	18	17	2	2	-----	-----	-----
\$300, under \$400.....	17	5.1	-----	5	5	4	-----	1	1	1	-----
\$400, under \$500.....	10	3.0	-----	3	4	2	1	-----	-----	-----	-----
\$500, and over.....	16	4.8	-----	4	2	1	2	4	3	-----	-----
Not reporting earnings.....	234	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	234
Inapplicable (individual workers).....	60	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	60

In analyzing the earnings of the home workers it should be borne in mind that the actual returns were often less than the rates quoted for home work would indicate owing to charges for materials or utensils which the worker often had to buy, charges for delivery when the employer did not deliver the material and the families could not go for it themselves, tips or fees to drivers, car fares back and forth between the factory and the home, deductions for loss or spoilage, and loss of pay for work improperly done. Of the 628 families interviewed 499 reported that they had to use implements of some sort or extra materials such as thread and cement in order to do the work brought from the factory. Although 289 families reported that these were furnished by the employer and 64 failed to report as to whether or not they were furnished, 146 stated definitely that they were obliged to buy them themselves. Workers who scalloped lace, handkerchiefs, and underwear usually furnished their own scissors at a cost of 60 cents to \$1.25 a pair. Occasionally they were obliged to stand the expense of sharpening also, but usually this was done free of charge at the factory. Workers who beaded or embroidered women's dresses had to provide themselves with a frame, clamps, and needles. One worker estimated that she paid \$2.80 for the frame and clamps and \$1 for needles. Many engaged in some type of sewing had to furnish their own thread. One home worker who made dolls' dresses estimated her outlay for thread to be \$1.20 a week, another who made powder puffs reported that she spent 25 cents for thread on every \$5 earned, and still another that it cost her 60 cents on every \$20.

The cost of collecting and delivering home work was another item of considerable expense to a large number of home workers. The majority of the families interviewed (71 per cent) reported that the factory made no provision for delivering the work to them, and if there was no one in the family to go for it somebody had to be hired to do so. If the factory did deliver they were often charged for it or felt obliged to tip the driver. One woman reported that she paid a boy 25 cents a trip three times a week for getting buttons for her and returning them to the factory when finished. Another reported paying a fee of 10 to 25 cents for each delivery, and others a regular charge of 50 to 75 cents a week. Even when the families went for the work themselves the car fare mounted up. One woman who had to travel from Paterson to New York three times a week for her work said that it cost \$1.50 a trip to cover railroad fare and lunch in the city. Workers living in Newark and going to New York for work had to pay 40 cents in car fare and those traveling from Sayreville to South River by bus 20 cents for the round trip.

Charges for spoilage were sometimes heavy, especially if the family was obliged to buy the damaged article, as sometimes happened. One woman reported that she was required to buy two chemises, at a cost of \$1.40 each, which she had spoiled while scalloping, and another that she had paid \$1 each for two chemises on which food had been spilled. One family had to buy an entire suit from a custom tailor at a cost of \$25 because the coat had been damaged, and another family paid \$40 for a suit the coat to which had fallen on the stove and been burned. In several instances charges for spots were made. Three women reported a fine of \$1 to \$2.50 for spotting dresses and the lining of a coat. Another worker reported a fine of \$1.95 in one week for collars and cuffs damaged in the process of scalloping, a regular fine of 10 cents for each piece spoiled being assessed by the factory. Charges for loss were not reported frequently, but one woman said that she had been charged \$1 for embroidery floss that the factory manager claimed was missing. Loss of pay for work improperly done was frequent.

### ECONOMIC STATUS OF FAMILIES OF CHILD WORKERS

In 13 per cent of the 628 home-working families visited the father was dead, absent from the home, or incapacitated and unable to carry the burden of the family support. (Table 13.) Among an unselected group of school children in a study made in New York City<sup>1</sup> 20 per cent were in families in which the father was dead or absent from home, so that in this respect the home-working children were somewhat more favorably situated than the general run of children. Except for the families in which the father was absent or unable to work, the fathers were assuming their responsibilities as head of the house, but in most of the families the chief breadwinner—whether father, mother, or others—was engaged in an occupation paying

<sup>1</sup> Slawson, John: "Marital relations of parents and juvenile delinquency." *The Journal of Delinquency* (Whittier, Calif.), vol. 8, nos. 5-6 (September-November, 1923), pp. 278-286.

small wages or yielding an uncertain income. (Table 14.) A large proportion (30 per cent) were day laborers, the majority working at outdoor jobs, such as railroad repairing, sewer and street work, and building construction, and a few were even dependent upon odd jobs for their livelihood. Many (23 per cent) were semiskilled factory operatives. Six per cent were in domestic and personal service, chiefly janitors and barbers, and a like number were proprietors of small stores dispensing candy, cigars, and groceries, and hucksters and peddlers. In only 21 per cent of the families were the chief breadwinners in skilled trades, and of these many were engaged in such occupations as carpentering, painting, masonry, and bricklaying, which, though better paid than unskilled work, often yielded little better livelihood because so largely dependent upon weather conditions. Seasonal and irregular employment and incapacity for regular work on the part of the breadwinner had had their effect upon the home workers' families. Of the 482 fathers or chief breadwinners who were able to report as to the regularity of their work during the year only a little more than one-third (35 per cent) had been employed during the entire time, more than one-fourth (29 per cent) had been idle at least three months, and almost one-fifth (18 per cent) at least four months.

TABLE 13.—*Relationship of chief breadwinner to children engaged in industrial home work, by presence of father in the home*

Chief breadwinner	Families having children under 16 engaged in industrial home work					
	Total		Father present		Father absent	
	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution
Total.....	628	100.0	568	100.0	60	100.0
Father.....	544	86.6	544	95.8		
Mother.....	42	6.7	8	1.4	34	56.7
Other.....	42	6.7	16	2.8	26	43.3
Male.....	27	4.3	13	2.3	14	23.3
Female.....	15	2.4	3	.5	12	20.0

TABLE 14.—*Occupation and industry of chief breadwinner engaged in work outside the home*

Occupation and industry of chief breadwinner	Families having children under 16 engaged in industrial home work	
	Number	Per cent distribution
Total.....	628	
Reporting.....	602	100.0
Manufacturing and mechanical.....	415	68.9
Machinists and mechanics.....	19	3.2
Engineers and firemen.....	5	.8
Molders and other skilled metal workers.....	3	.5
Building trades.....	117	19.4
Contractors.....	4	.7
Skilled mechanics.....	51	8.5
Laborers.....	62	10.3
In factories.....	250	41.5
Owners, contractors, and foremen.....	9	1.5
Skilled workers.....	35	5.8
Semiskilled operatives.....	136	22.6
Laborers.....	46	7.6
Occupation not specified.....	24	4.0
Tailors.....	11	1.8
Others in manufacturing and mechanical.....	10	1.7
Transportation.....	65	10.8
Drivers and chauffeurs.....	11	1.8
Laborers.....	47	7.8
Other and occupation not specified.....	7	1.2
Trade.....	37	6.1
Dealers (proprietors and managers).....	23	3.8
Hucksters and peddlers.....	7	1.2
Salesmen.....	4	.7
Laborers.....	3	.5
Domestic and personal service.....	34	5.6
Professional pursuits.....	4	.7
Clerical occupations.....	5	.8
Public service.....	16	2.7
Agricultural pursuits.....	6	1.0
Laborers (n. o. s. and odd jobs).....	20	3.3
Not reporting.....	1	
Inapplicable (no occupation outside home).....	25	

Information as to the amount of their earnings during the year of the study from sources other than industrial home work was obtained from 495 of the chief breadwinners in the 604 families in which the chief breadwinner worked outside the home. Almost half (45 per cent) reported that they had earned less than \$1,050 in that time and nearly one-fourth (23 per cent) that they had made less than \$850. The average yearly earnings of the chief breadwinner in the group as a whole was \$1,129. The earnings of the chief breadwinners in these families were lower than the average annual earnings of chief breadwinners in workingmen's families, as indicated in a cost-of-living study made by the United States Bureau of Labor



Statistics in 92 industrial centers.<sup>2</sup> In this study, which is based upon reports from more than 12,000 families, it was found that the average annual earnings of the chief breadwinners was \$1,349, or more than \$200 more than those of the heads of home-working families. Part of the difference is explained by the fact that some of the chief breadwinners in the home-working families were women, whereas all those in the Bureau of Labor Statistics study were men. However, the earnings even of the male chief breadwinners among the homeworkers averaged only \$1,162, or approximately \$200 less than those of the chief breadwinners in the Bureau of Labor Statistics group, showing that even where the fathers were at home and earning the living the home-working families were on a somewhat lower plane economically than the general run of workingmen's families.

In the majority of the families interviewed (55 per cent) there was at least one other wage earner in the family besides the chief breadwinner. These wage earners were usually older boys and girls, but in some families the mother also assisted in supporting the family. Aside from the 42 mothers who were chief breadwinners, it was found that at the time of the study 68 were supplementing their husband's earnings—19 by keeping lodgers and 49 by working outside the home. The women working away from home, like the men, were in low-paid jobs—many of them were buttonhole makers, or hand sewers in tailor shops, subject to periodic unemployment; a number were proprietors of small stores or helped in their husband's stores; and the remainder were largely semiskilled factory workers, helpers in laundries, and domestic servants.

In some of the families the combined earnings of all wage earners, from work other than industrial home work, afforded a fairly comfortable income; more often than not, however, they fell below the average for workingmen's families in this country. (Table 15.) According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the total average earnings per family, the families averaging 4.9 persons, were \$1,455.<sup>3</sup> Among 475 of the 628 families included in the home-working study from whom information as to family earnings could be obtained more than half (57 per cent) had had less than \$1,450 from sources other than home work. The average family earnings besides earnings from industrial home work were \$1,485 a year, and the average number of persons per family was 6.8. For families of 5, approximately the size of the families in the Bureau of Labor Statistics study, the average earned income from sources other than home work was only \$1,249. The annual earnings for home work averaged \$186 per family. With the aid of home work and of other earnings of mothers and children the home-working families were only slightly less prosperous than workingmen's families in general.

<sup>2</sup> Cost of Living in the United States. U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Bulletin 357, pp. 1, 4. Washington, 1924.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 5.



TABLE 15.—*Annual earnings of family from employment outside home, by number of persons in family*

Annual earnings of family from employment outside home	Families having children under 16 engaged in industrial home work									
	Total		Number of persons in family							
	Number	Per cent distribution	2 or 3 <sup>1</sup>	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 and over
Total.....	628		24	65	74	116	119	101	77	52
Reporting earnings.....	475	100.0	17	50	58	87	82	83	58	40
Under \$650.....	38	8.0	5	6	4	8	5	8	2	-----
\$650, under \$1,050.....	103	21.7	17	19	10	18	22	15	7	5
\$1,050, under \$1,450.....	131	27.6	3	13	19	34	21	23	13	5
\$1,450, under \$1,850.....	85	17.9	1	7	10	16	19	10	14	8
\$1,850, under \$2,250.....	51	10.7	1	3	8	5	8	11	8	7
\$2,250, under \$2,650.....	27	5.7	-----	2	4	3	1	7	5	5
\$2,650, under \$3,050.....	23	4.8	-----	-----	2	3	3	6	6	3
\$3,050 and over.....	17	3.6	-----	-----	1	-----	3	3	3	7
Not reporting earnings.....	136	-----	4	14	11	26	35	17	17	12
Inapplicable (no outside work).....	17	-----	3	1	5	3	2	1	2	-----

<sup>1</sup> Includes 3 families of 2 persons.

In 14 of the families visited home work was the only remunerative employment reported for any member of the family. In two of these families the fathers were engaged in handkerchief embroidery, which afforded an income comparable to that of other occupations reported by the fathers included in the study. Another instance was the family of a home-work contractor whose earnings included a profit from work distributed to other households as well as that done by his own family. Eight families did not attempt to live upon the proceeds from their home work; in three families the fathers were receiving industrial compensation, in two the mothers had been granted pensions by the State board of children's guardians, and in three assistance was being received from relief organizations. For three families it was impossible to ascertain whether there were other sources of income than home work.

In the smaller communities visited, where registration of families receiving aid from churches or organizations was not available, no attempt was made to ascertain the number of families among those included in the study who had received aid, but in Newark and Paterson, where 480 of the 628 families lived and where such registration did exist, 47 families had received assistance from either public or private agencies in periods of emergency, 24 of them within the period covered by this study. In addition, 11 mothers had been granted pensions by the State board of children's guardians.

### REASONS FOR DOING HOME WORK

According to the mothers, most of the children had begun to do home work for the same reasons that the parents themselves had begun it. Occasionally an older girl on leaving school took up the

work as a trade in preference to work outside the home. A few of the younger children did it of their own accord—because they were urged on by friends who were doing it or by contractors or because they wanted to earn money for “extras,” such as movies and candy, or for special objects, such as roller skates and baseball suits. In general, however, the mother, or occasionally the father, instigated the work, and the children helped as a matter of course or because they were obliged to. (Table 16.)

In 67 of the 628 families the mothers reported that they did the work for “extra money” or to buy clothes which the family otherwise could not afford. “The kids need shoes,” they would say; “the girls want pretty things to wear,” or “small earnings are helpful,” and “it is well to have something on the side.” A few wanted money for a definite purpose, such as to help buy a house, a truck needed in the father’s business, or a set of false teeth. One mother did home work to send money to a child still in Italy. Several used this means of getting money for Christmas presents, and in some families the earnings from this source were used to pay doctors’ bills or to keep up insurance. Forty-one mothers reported that they took up the work as a pastime or to “keep the children busy” or “off the street.” Fifty-two could give no other reasons for the work than that it was a custom in the neighborhood or that, seeing friends and neighbors doing it they did it also. “The woman upstairs got some hooks to string for money bags from the factory and asked if we wouldn’t like to help and earn some money,” explained one mother. And again, “Everybody does it. Other people’s children help—why not ours?”

TABLE 16.—*Reasons given by families for doing home work*

Reason given for home work	Families reporting home work	
	Number	Per cent distribution
Total.....	628	-----
Reporting reason.....	566	100.0
Inadequate income.....	355	62.7
Extra money.....	57	10.1
Saw neighbor or friends doing it.....	45	8.0
Pastime.....	23	4.1
To keep children off the street.....	18	3.2
To get specific articles.....	17	3.0
Urged by contractor or manufacturer.....	12	2.1
To buy clothes.....	10	1.8
To help a friend.....	8	1.4
Custom in the family.....	7	1.2
Other reasons.....	14	2.5
Not reporting reason.....	62	-----

Almost two-thirds (355, or 63 per cent) of the families, however, reported that they had begun to work to supplement the family income, which in most of the cases was inadequate, principally because of underemployment. A few accounts of the families who did home work will make clear their attitude toward the work and illustrate to what extent the necessity for earning money was felt.

Powder puffs—pink, white, and yellow—covered chairs, tables, and even the top of the stove in the C. home. Mrs. C. began to “take” puffs eight years before the study, when her husband was ill, and she had continued to work on them in periods of need ever since. Mr. C., a street laborer, made \$4.50 a day when he worked, but he was usually unemployed during the winter months, and during the spring in which this study was made he had been ill and unable to work for an additional two months. The two older girls, 11 and 12 years of age, had been helping “do puffs” for some time, and the 9-year-old girl had just begun. Each of the children had started at the age of 9 to turn and fill, and were gradually learning the more difficult work. The 12-year-old girl, who had been “sewing” for two years, could make 2 dozen puffs an hour. The 11-year-old girl, who had been trusted with this part of the work for only a month, could make 1 dozen, and the 9-year-old girl, who only turned and filled, could take care of about 3 dozen in that time. The mother complained of this last child because she continually left her work to run out and play. Every day except Saturday and Sunday Mrs. C. worked on powder puffs in the interim of household duties. She usually spent four or five hours a day at the work, but the children worked only one or two. Together the four workers made from \$6 to \$8 a week. For a time Mrs. C. had tried making baby dresses instead of puffs, as the former work was easier and more profitable to make and did not require the assistance of the children, leaving them free for the housework, but after a month or two the factory discontinued baby dresses, and she was forced to return to the puffs. At the time of the bureau agent's visit she said that when her oldest child should have attained the legal working age her home work would no longer be necessary.

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The D. family had depended for several years upon the proceeds from home work to supplement the family income. Mr. D. kept a small shoe-shining parlor, the earnings from which were never sufficient to feed and clothe his eight children. In the summer months he sometimes made as much as \$15 a week, but in the winter months his receipts amounted to practically nothing. Because of their desperate need, Mrs. D. began to “sew coats.” With such a large family she had little time to give to work during the day, but often sat up until 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning to finish an assignment. None of the children was able to help with the sewing, but the two older children pulled the bastings. Mrs. D.'s eyes were in bad condition, which added to the strain of long hours of night work, but she regarded her earnings as absolutely necessary for the support of the family.

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Three years before the study, when her husband had suffered a long period of unemployment and sickness, in the midst of which the landlord raised the rent, Mrs. A. decided that “some one in the family had to work,” and turned to home work, having heard that “there was good money in beading.” At first the 11-year-old daughter did the housework while her mother devoted all her time to beading, but later the child learned to “bead” in spite of a dislike for it. During the year of the study Mr. A. was again unemployed for five months, owing to a strike in the building trades, and home work was again resorted to by Mrs. A. and her daughter. They managed to make \$150 in nine months.

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In the S. family there were seven children, the oldest 13 years of age and the youngest a little over 1 year. The father, a day laborer in a machine shop, worked irregularly, never making more than \$20 a week. For 11 years Mrs. S. had been embroidering and hemstitching dresses to supplement her husband's meager earnings. For three years the oldest daughter had assisted, and for one year the second oldest. Home work yielded them only a poor income—\$5 to \$6 a week about six months of the year. To earn even that small amount the three of them worked on an average of four hours a day, after school and at night, six days a week. Sometimes they worked a few hours on Sunday as well. Mrs. S. was not well, and the housework as well as the care of the babies fell upon the two oldest girls.

In the R. family all other work that was not absolutely imperative was set aside for home work. Every moment that her strength allowed Mrs. R., assisted by two of her seven children, made powder puffs to help meet household expenses. If she needed a supply of puffs during the day the children were kept from school to go for them. Mr. R. had "never been a good provider." He was sick much of the time, and a large amount of their small means went for medicine. When he did work his earnings were so little that, as Mrs. R. expressed it, "they had never so much as gone to a movie in eight years."

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Six of Mr. and Mrs. F.'s eight children were under 16 years of age and still in school. Mr. F., a son, 18, and a daughter, 22, were the wage earners in the family. The winter before the study the son and daughter were laid off during slack periods, and the father's earnings of \$41 a week were not sufficient for the family of 10. Some work had to be found, and the daughter managed to obtain some lace to cut and wind at home. In order to make anything at the work the mother and four younger children, 9, 11, 13, and 15 years of age, had to help. The mother and the older girl worked all day and in the evening, and the children helped whenever they could outside school hours. They usually worked from 7 to 8 in the morning, in the afternoon after school until 6 o'clock, and from 7 to 8.30 in the evening. The group averaged about 46 cents an hour. At the time of the agent's visit the older girl had returned to work in the factory, and the 15-year-old girl had left school to work. The older boy was still unemployed. The family were still doing home work, however, the two working girls helping at night.

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A year and a half before the study the father in a family of nine was taken to a hospital with an acute attack of rheumatism, and two daughters, about 10 and 13 years of age at the time, began embroidering women's dresses to help tide the family over the emergency. The father never completely recovered, however, and worked only irregularly, and although there were two additional wage earners, a boy of 18 and a girl of 16, the combined earnings of the three (\$2,286 a year) were not sufficient to support the family, so the girls have continued their home work in order to earn money for their clothes. They worked every day after school until supper time and after supper until 9 o'clock. Together they earned about 10 cents an hour.

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The B. family—father, mother, and three children—and two lodgers lived in four spotless rooms on the upper floor of a two-family dwelling. The father, a car cleaner for the railroad, earned \$20 a week when work was to be had, but he usually had no work two or three days a week. Of the children, a 15-year-old girl worked in a slipper factory, averaging \$11.50 a week. A 13-year-old girl was in school, and the youngest child had not yet begun school. Seeing all the other children in the neighborhood, even the landlord's daughter, cutting lace, Mr. B., discouraged at his own small earnings, thought it would be well if the 13-year-old girl could learn to do the work and earn enough to pay for her clothes. Accordingly, the latter went with the landlord's daughter to the factory for lace. Every available minute after school until 6.30 and all day on Saturday the two girls kept at the work. Together the maximum amount that they could cut in one day was 4 dozen lace roses at 5 cents a dozen. The employer, fully aware that they were doing the work unsupervised, took no risk in giving them materials of value but offered them only the poorer quality for which the pay was unusually low. The two girls kept at the work throughout the summer until no more work was available and did it again for a month or so in the spring. Their weekly earnings averaged 25 cents each.

Whether the earnings from home work were more necessary in the families interviewed than in others in the same locality in which the children did not work there was no way to determine, but it is apparent, if the families visited can be taken as a fair example, that



the great majority of the industrial home workers are very near the border line of economic dependence and that in many families the pressure of unemployment, ill health, and low wages is sufficiently great to cause parents to turn to home work. But home workers earn so little as a rule that home work offers no solution of the problem of family dependency. Bearing in mind the fact that the burden of the work falls very often upon the mothers of young children and on the children themselves, it could not be regarded as offering an adequate solution even if the earnings added appreciably to the family income. More adequate relief measures are needed in cases where the father's earnings are insufficient to support the family or where illness, widowhood, or desertion creates a special need, while persistent thought is given to the solution of unemployment, a living wage for unskilled work, and other economic problems.



## INDUSTRIAL HOME WORK IN RELATION TO PUBLIC HEALTH

### WORKROOMS

Many of the families doing home work lived in overcrowded quarters—53 per cent had more than 1.5 persons a room, or, for example, more than 6 persons in four rooms—and few, even of those living in comparatively commodious quarters, had a room to devote exclusively to the work. Home work added considerably to the confusion in these households. Many did not have even a spare closet or cupboard in which to keep the working materials. Upon entering a home it was quite usual to see coats, powder puffs, dolls' dresses, or other kinds of work heaped upon tables, chairs, sewing machines, and sometimes even the tops of stoves, or lying in piles in a corner of the room. A little more than three-fifths of the 628 families visited carried on their work in the kitchen, which was often living and dining room and occasionally even a bedroom as well, and 37 families used a bedroom for the work. The remaining families had a living room, a dining room, or an even more convenient place in which to work. Twenty families had separate quarters on their own premises in which to work, unused rooms or cellars, or, as in the case of the handkerchief embroiderers in South River, small sheds in the back yard. Two families worked in the public hallway of the tenement building in which they lived. In 39 families the home work was done away from home—at the houses of neighbors or of relatives or of the contractor.

The large majority of the houses visited were clean and in fairly good condition, but some were extremely neglected and some could be classed only as filthy. In one flat on the first floor of a rickety frame building in the rear of a larger tenement a family of seven were crowded together in four small rooms. When visited, the mother, children, and house were indescribably dirty. Finished dolls' dresses were scattered over a kitchen table littered with remnants of food, and on the floor in the corner of the room lay another pile of dresses waiting to be stitched. In another home the bureau agent found a small girl and her mother sitting in the middle of the kitchen with a litter of coats scattered on the floor around them. The house was extremely dirty. The woodwork was so old and worn that it could probably not have been made sanitary even had the mother attempted to clean it. As she talked the child stood on and walked over the coats. Another home-work shop was the very dirty kitchen of a three-room flat where a woman and her three children made powder puffs. Two dirty children were seen playing on the floor, and a goat, evidently as much at home in the house as outside, was just coming out of the door as the bureau agent entered. In the only bedroom, which could be seen from the kitchen, was an unmade

bed in filthy condition, and in the corner on the floor was a pile of ragged and much soiled clothing which was used alternately for bed covering and wearing apparel. Another family scalloped handkerchiefs in a dark and damp cellar, and still another sewed coats in a bedroom so damp that the moisture could be seen running down the walls. Again, in an unswept hallway in a large tenement house an agent came upon seven children gathered together from the neighborhood to sew coats. The garments were being dragged over the floor this way and that at the will of the small workers, regardless of dirt. In a basement flat, four steps below the level of the yard, another family made powder puffs. When visited, the mother was sitting with a large box of unfinished puffs before her at an open window. The window sill was on a level with a yard, which was being swept and from which the dust came in through the window during the entire interview and settled over the puffs.

From none of these families or others in similar homes could any evidence be obtained that the employers responsible for distributing the work had ever visited them or made any attempt to ascertain the condition of the homes in which the work they gave out was being done.

### COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Each mother interviewed was questioned as to whether any illness had occurred in the family within the three years preceding the interview. In addition, in Newark and Paterson, where such agencies existed, the records of the Visiting Nurse Association and other welfare organizations were searched for information regarding the health conditions of families included in the study. It was found that in 27 of the families interviewed work had been carried on while some member of the family was known to be suffering from a communicable disease and in several others when infectious diseases were believed to be present though a definite diagnosis was not obtained.

Other cases of communicable diseases may have occurred the existence of which the parents were unwilling to reveal through fear that their work might be taken from them. Only one or two parents stated that they had notified the factory and had returned all work in their possession as soon as the disease broke out in the home. Among the diseases found in the homes where home work was being done were chicken pox, measles, whooping cough, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, erysipelas, influenza, syphilis, and gonorrhea. One family had a history of chicken pox, scarlet fever, and erysipelas within the year, and through each illness they had strung tags. Advanced cases of tuberculosis were found in families where coats were being finished, hooks being fastened into brassieres, women's dresses being embroidered, Christmas cards being sorted, and baby clothes being made. One mother reported that though she never allowed the father, the victim of the disease, to handle the work, it had been in the home all during his illness and up to the time of his death. Syphilis and gonorrhea were reported in several families where coats were being finished, and measles and skin eruptions were found in homes where powder puffs were being made.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Industrial home work is distributed in New Jersey not only by manufacturers within the State but perhaps to an even greater extent by those of neighboring centers, chiefly New York City. Work is done in New Jersey homes upon a large and varied number of articles, chief among which are men's clothing and other wearing apparel. In the majority of cases home work is not given out direct from the manufacturer to the families doing the work at home but is distributed through contractors who act as middlemen between the factory and the home workers.

As in other eastern cities, the families doing home work in New Jersey communities are chiefly those of immigrants. In all but two of the seven cities surveyed the great majority were Italian.

Home work is usually a family activity, and persons of all ages and degrees of skill are engaged in it, but most of the work is done by women and minors. Children under 16 years of age form a large percentage of these workers. The 628 families visited in the course of the study included 4,353 persons, of whom 1,902 were home workers. Of these 63 per cent were children under 16 years of age and 27 per cent mothers. Other members of the family, including fathers, older brothers and sisters, and relatives who were members of the household, constituted 10 per cent of the group.

Because of the ease with which most types of work sent into the home can be divided into simple operations, home work readily lends itself to the employment of even very small children. Those too young to help with the more difficult operations assist with the simpler parts of the work. Almost one-fourth of the children included in the study were under 10 years of age and almost four-fifths under 14. Boys as well as girls were home workers, but they were in the minority and on the whole younger than the girls.

The principal kinds of work in which the children were found to be engaged were, in the order of their importance, finishing men's clothing, beading and embroidering women's dresses, making powder puffs, stringing tags, making artificial flowers, making dolls' dresses, scalloping and embroidering handkerchiefs, cutting and scalloping lace and embroidery, putting hooks and eyes in brassieres, making bead jewelry, carding buttons, packing Christmas cards and seals, and carding safety pins. Children also usually carried the materials back and forth between the factory and the home.

Because many of the industries distributing home work (in particular the men's clothing industry, in connection with which 44 per cent of all the children interviewed were employed) had slack periods falling in the summer months, more children were found doing home work while school was in session than during the summer-vacation months.

Although as a rule the children's work was irregular, depending upon the frequency with which work could be obtained from the factory, even when school was in session the majority were accustomed to spend two or three hours a day, and a few (13 per cent of the 715 children reporting their hours of work) four or more hours a day at home work whenever work was available. Frequently this meant night work even for those reporting the shorter hours. Of 1,033 children who reported as to night work during the school year, 46 per cent, and of 696 children who reported as to night work in the summer vacation, 36 per cent usually worked in the evening after supper, the majority one or two hours, a smaller proportion between three and four hours, and some even four and five hours. Older children generally worked longer than younger ones.

In New Jersey communities, as in other cities where studies of home work have been made, it was found that in most cases home work was undertaken to supplement an inadequate family income. Although the parents of the majority of the children were living, the chief breadwinners in these families were engaged for the most part in occupations paying small wages or yielding uncertain annual incomes. Many of them were in outside jobs which were dependent upon weather conditions and were consequently subject to considerable unemployment. Of the 475 families who reported as to their earnings during the year of the study more than half had an income from employment other than home work of less than \$1,450 a year, although the average number of persons in a family was 6.8.

The earnings derived from home work were very small since the rates of pay were low and much of the work irregular. Of 356 children who were able to give any information as to their individual earnings, 67 per cent earned less than 15 cents an hour, 40 per cent less than 10 cents, and 12 per cent less than 5 cents when working at their best speed. Group earnings were similarly low, only 22 per cent of 368 families reporting their hourly earnings having made as much as 40 cents an hour, although the number of workers in the family ranged from two to six and with a few exceptions included one adult and frequently two. Of 334 families who kept an account of their yearly earnings from home work almost half reported that they had made less than \$100 in the 12 months.

The majority of the homes visited were clean and in fairly good condition, but in many there were evidences of neglect and in some extreme filth. Twenty-seven homes were found in which home work had been carried on while some member of the family was suffering from a communicable disease. Among the illnesses of this kind were measles, chicken pox, whooping cough, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, erysipelas, influenza, syphilis, and gonorrhea.

Child labor in industrial home work is not regulated either by the New Jersey child labor law or by the sweatshop law requiring that homes where the work is done be licensed by the State department of labor. According to the records of the department, more than 4,000 licenses for home work were issued in the State during the year of the study, but only 73 of the 628 families visited were licensed. Although a few years prior to the study the department had made very special efforts to enforce the sweatshop law, and especially to



decrease the number of children engaging in home work, it had found the fact that the law did not penalize the employer, a serious obstacle to effective enforcement. An added difficulty in controlling the home-work situation in New Jersey is the fact that much of the work is sent into the State by manufacturers in the near-by States of New York and Pennsylvania, who are thus released from the restrictions of the home-work laws of their own States—much more stringent than those of New Jersey—but who can seldom if ever be prosecuted under the New Jersey law.

## APPENDIX.—TEXT OF NEW JERSEY SWEATSHOP LAWS

[Laws of 1904, ch. 64, as amended and supplemented by Laws of 1917, ch. 176]

SEC. 31. No room or rooms, apartment or apartments, in any tenement or dwelling house, or in a building situated immediately in the rear of any apartment, tenement, or dwelling house shall be used for the purpose of manufacturing, altering, repairing, or finishing therein, for wages or for sale, any articles whatsoever unless a license is secured therefor, as provided in this act.

Application for such a license shall be made to the commissioner of labor by any family or a member thereof, or any person, firm, or corporation desiring to manufacture, alter, repair, or finish any such articles in any room or apartment in any tenement or dwelling house or by any person, firm, or corporation, desiring to perform such work in any building in the rear of any tenement or dwelling house. Each license shall run continuously for a period of six months, whereupon a new or further license must be obtained. Each application for such a license shall describe the room or apartment, shall specify the number of persons to be employed therein, and shall be in such form as the commissioner of labor may determine. Blank applications shall be prepared and furnished by the commissioner of labor. Before any such license is granted an inspection of the room, apartment, or building sought to be licensed shall be made by the commissioner of labor, factory inspector, or, in the discretion of the commissioner of labor, by any local board of health or its inspector or inspectors. If the commissioner of labor or such inspectors as herein provided for ascertain that such room, apartment, or building is in a clean and proper sanitary condition, and that the articles specified in this section may be manufactured therein under clean and healthful conditions, he shall grant a license permitting the use of such room, apartment, or building for the purpose of manufacturing, altering, repairing, or finishing such articles. Each license shall state the maximum number of persons who may be employed in the room or rooms to which such license relates. The number of persons to be so employed shall be determined by the number of cubic feet of air space contained in each room or apartment mentioned in such license, allowing not less than 250 cubic feet for each person employed between the hours of 6 o'clock in the morning and 6 o'clock in the evening, unless by special written permit of the commissioner of labor, and not less than 400 cubic feet for each person employed therein between the hours of 6 in the evening and 6 in the morning, but no permit shall be issued unless such room or apartment has suitable light at all times during such hours as such persons are employed therein.

Such license must be posted in a conspicuous place in the room or apartment to which it relates. It may be revoked by the commissioner of labor if the health of the community or of the employees requires it, or if it appears that the rooms or apartments to which such license relates are not in a healthy and proper sanitary condition. Every room or apartment in which any of the articles named in this section are manufactured, altered, repaired, or finished shall be kept in a clean and sanitary condition, and shall be subject to examination and inspection by the commissioner of labor, factory inspectors, or local boards of health for the purpose of ascertaining whether said garments or articles, or any part or parts thereof, are clean and free from vermin and every matter of infectious or contagious nature.

If the commissioner of labor, factory inspector, or local board of health shall find evidence of infectious or contagious disease present in any workshop or in goods manufactured or in process of manufacture therein the commissioner of labor, factory inspector, or local board of health shall issue such orders as the public health may require and shall condemn and destroy such infections and contagious articles.

SEC. 31a. No person, firm, or corporation shall hire, employ, or contract with any member of a family, or any person, firm, or person not holding a license therefor, to manufacture, alter, repair, or finish any articles whatsoever in

any room or apartment in any tenement or dwelling or any room or apartment in any building situated in the rear of a tenement or dwelling house, as aforesaid, and no person, firm, or corporation shall receive, handle, or convey to others or sell, hold in stock, or expose for sale any articles whatsoever unless made under the sanitary conditions and in accordance with this act. This act shall not prevent, however, the employment of a tailor or seamstress by any person or family for the purpose of making, altering, repairing, or finishing any articles of wearing apparel for such person or for family use, and shall not prevent such employment by women's exchanges or philanthropic associations not organized for pecuniary profit.

SEC. 32. Any person, firm, or corporation being the owner, lessee, or occupant of the place or places to which the preceding sections or any part thereof relate, shall, for the violation of any of the provisions therein, be liable to a penalty of \$50 for the first offense and \$100 for each succeeding offense.

[Laws of 1917, ch. 229, supplemental to Laws of 1904, ch. 64]

SECTION 1. The commissioner of labor may, when he deems it necessary, require that all rooms or apartments used for the purpose of manufacturing, altering, repairing, or finishing therein any articles as mentioned in section 31 of the act of which this act is a supplement shall be separate from and have no door, window, or other opening into any living or sleeping room or any tenement or dwelling, and that no other rooms or apartments shall be used at any time for sleeping purpose and shall contain no bed, bedding, or cooking utensils. He may further require or direct a separate outside entrance to the rooms or apartments where the work is carried on, and if such work is carried on above the first floor, then there may be directed a separate and distinct stairway leading thereto, and every such room or apartment shall be well and sufficiently lighted, heated, and ventilated by ordinary, or, if necessary, by mechanical appliances. He may also require suitable closet arrangements and separate toilets when and as he deems it necessary.

SEC. 2. Any person, firm, or corporation, by themselves or by their agents or managers, contracting for the manufacturing, altering, repairing, or finishing of any articles whatsoever, as mentioned in section 31 of the act of which this is a supplement, or giving out material for which they or any part of them are to be manufactured, altered, repaired, or finished, shall keep a register of the names and addresses plainly written in English of the persons to whom such article or articles are given to be so manufactured, altered, repaired, or finished, or with whom they have contracted to do the same. Such register shall be subject to inspection on demand by the commissioner of labor or factory inspectors, and a copy thereof shall be furnished at his or their request.

SEC. 3. No articles of food, no dolls, dolls' clothing, and no article of children's or infants' wearing apparel shall be manufactured, altered, repaired, or finished in whole or in part for a factory, either directly or through the instrumentality of one or more contractors or third persons in a tenement house, in any portion of an apartment, any part of which is used for living purposes.

SEC. 4. Any person, firm, or corporation, being the owner, lessee, or occupant of the place or places to which the preceding sections or any part thereof relate, shall, for the violation of any of the provisions herein, be liable to a penalty of \$50 for the first offense, and \$100 for each succeeding offense.



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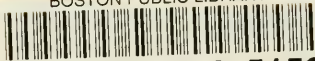


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